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CONGRESS MOVES ON toward adjournment with every prospect that the Administration will get its heart's desire of avoiding an extra session. As we write, the bonus-loan bill, passed by enormous majorities in both houses, only awaits a veto to be promptly repassed by more than the required two-thirds vote. Nobody knows within some hundreds of millions what its immediate cost will be, because nobody knows what proportion of the veterans will apply for the enlarged loans made possible by the measure. It is to be financed, apparently, up to the amount of $735,000,000, if necessary, by the sale of government securities now held by the Veterans Bureau. This new bonus legislation is indefensible. The government ought to give the most generous care to every veteran who suffered disabilities as the result of war service. But to give all veterans special privileges just because they were in the army is a vicious principle, and we wish that public men had the courage to face the issue squarely. This bill simply carries that wrong principle a little farther, and we believe that the President will do right in vetoing it, though we scarcely expect him to put forward the right reason for his veto. We do believe that if he had earlier offered any kind of leadership in unemployment relief, he might have done much to forestall this unwise measure, pushed through under guise of such relief.

THE PASSAGE BY BOTH HOUSES of the compromise Muscle Shoals bill is generally regarded as another substantial victory for Senator Norris in his tireless fight for public power systems. Plainly it was so considered by those Administration supporters who characterized the bill as "socialistic legislation, tending to sovietize the government and communize the people." For ourselves, we had not thought it quite so bad as that. While the bill provides for the lease of the nitrate plant to private industry, the conditions are such as to render it unlikely, in the opinion of many observers, that a lessee can be found within a year, in which case the government itself is to operate. The real issue, of course, is power, and the bill opens the way to public transmission as well as generation—the principle for which Senator Norris has contended. If the President decides to kill the measure, as is expected, we hope that he will not resort to a pocket veto, but will state clearly the reasons for his disapproval. His stand on public operation is well known, and for the sake of clear economic and political thinking we should like to see the issue clearly drawn in this test case if the country is for a further period to be deprived of the benefits of its great investment at Muscle Shoals.

SECRETARY DOAK'S PROPOSAL of an Administration substitute for the Wagner employment-exchanges bill came so late in the Congressional session that its only immediate result seemed likely to be the prevention of any action at all on this important question. Senator Wagner's bill, it will be remembered, contemplates federal aid to State employment exchanges, with the idea of building up a national system by this means. The Doak proposal, on the other hand, was for an enlargement of the existing employment service of the Department of Labor, with such cooperation as the Secretary of Labor may deem advisable with existing State agencies. We have repeatedly expressed the conviction that an effective system of employment exchanges must operate on a national scale; all available information indicates that the Wagner bill offers more promise than the Doak measure of bringing such a system into existence. Senator Wagner's bill has the support of nearly all competent students of the question, and in essentially its present form has been before the country for no less than three years. For two years it has been open to the present Administration to propose a substitute, yet instead of coming forward with any plan of its own, it sat silent until the Wagner bill had passed the Senate, had been favorably reported by the House Judiciary Committee, had been placed on the calendar, and was scheduled for action by the House. The overwhelming rejection of the Doak substitute and the passage of the Wagner bill without a roll call was a well-deserved defeat for the Administration.

TWO IMPORTANT MEASURES affecting the railroads were brought before Congress on February 21. Chairman Parker, of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, introduced a resolution for an

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amendment to bring railroad holding companies under control of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Senate Interstate Commerce Committee reported favorably a joint resolution for an investigation of the competition of other forms of transportation with the railroads. The Parker resolution is the outcome of an extensive investigation of railroad ownership just completed under the direction of Dr. Walter W. M. Splawn. It indicates that thirty-two railroads, with 47,000 miles operated, are held in large part by one or two interests, while sixty-two roads, operating 146,000 miles, show no marked concentration of ownership. Fifteen major groups control 210,000 miles, or about 85 per cent of the entire railway mileage. Family and individual holdings are much smaller than had been supposed, but those expert real-estate railroad men the Van Sweringens control 28,411 miles. Two hundred nineteen individuals hold 2,298 directorships, not including those of subsidiary companies, Charles Hayden heading the list with no less than sixty-four positions. The necessity of commission control of holding companies, if regulation is to be effective, is perfectly clear; scarcely less clear is the cumbersome ineffectiveness of our method of trying to build up an economical transportation system by regulation of private profit-seeking financial groups.

FIVE STATES have joined with the Appalachian Electric Power Company in the latter's fight to prevent the Federal Power Commission from exercising jurisdiction over the power plant the company contemplates building on the New River near Radford, Virginia. It is contended that the New River is non-navigable and therefore subject to State, and not to federal, authority; but should the federal government decide that it has this authority, then the States and the company want the government's powers limited to the issuing of a restricted or "minor-part" license for the sole purpose of protecting navigation on the Kanawha River, of which the New River is a non-navigable branch. Why these five States—Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Arkansas—have lined up with the power trust instead of on the side of the electric-power consumers is a question that need not be discussed here. Whatever be the talk of State's rights in this discussion, the battle centers about the power trust's efforts to avoid regulation of any kind, and in supporting the power combination in this fight the State governments are all too obviously betraying their constituents into the hands of the trust.

VIOLATIONS OF CIVIL LIBERTY, according to a report of the American Civil Liberties Union, were more numerous in 1930 than in any other year since 1921, owing largely to unemployment and consequent fear of trouble from radicals. Such violations are likely to be excused when committed in what is supposed to be a good cause. The ordinary citizen was little concerned at the overriding of the rights of conscientious objectors and hyphenates in war time, or of suspected aliens and Communists in the post-war years. We denounced those violations then, and we denounce no less heartily the dangerous violations that are occurring today in other fields. We give two recent instances in New York. In the celebrated Bank of United States failure, investigators have been allowed to commandeer the letters, records, checks, and other papers of individuals, banks, and business concerns connected with the failure, on the mere chance of discovering something incriminating. On January 18 the special counsel in the Appellate Division's inquiry into the magistrates' courts was reported as having sent subpoenas to 600 banks requiring them to submit the accounts of some fifty-seven policemen suspected of graft, together with all deposit or withdrawal slips, checks cashed, drafts, signature cards, contracts for safe-deposit boxes, and records of visits to such boxes. Similar subpoenas were to be sent to all brokerage houses in the Stock Exchange. We have no desire to shelter criminals, but we should like to see a legal test of the validity of action of this kind.

THE MACDONALD GOVERNMENT continues to swing back and forth between victories and reverses, escaping defeats serious enough to turn it out of office and winning victories that give no clear assurance that it can long go on. It has lost its education bill in the House of Lords, and while the defeat does not necessarily mean that the bill will have to be abandoned, it is nevertheless quite likely to be quietly dropped. On the same day that the Lords threw out the measure, the bill to increase by about $100,000,000 the borrowing power of the unemployment-insurance fund was advanced to second reading in the Commons by a substantial majority of sixty-one, notwithstanding that only three days before a Conservative amendment reducing to $50,000,000 the proposed increase had been defeated by no more than thirty-one votes. The trade-disputes bill and the electoral-reform bill, the latter of special interest to the Liberals, are contentious measures and their progress in the Commons is slow. Of the four items of the Labor program just mentioned, then, the unemployment-insurance-fund bill is the only one with which the Government has been able to have its way, and the privilege of adding another $100,000,000 to the $300,000,000 already voted (and nearly spent) for unemployment relief is hardly a thing to be cheerful about.

AMERICANS WHO THINK that the dole is ruining England would do well to listen to Philip Snowden. The doughty Chancellor of the Exchequer more than once has made a sensation by looking disagreeable facts in the face and telling his countrymen just what he saw. Yet so far from holding the system of unemployment relief responsible for Great Britain's present troubles, he declares: "I say with full conviction that our social services in the last two years have been the salvation of our country." Chiefly because of these social services, Mr. Snowden asserts, Britain is standing the strain of the present crisis better than the United States, Germany, or any other industrial country. To our shame he cites the United States as an example of suffering comparable to that existing in England when the unemployed had no recourse "apart from the tender mercies of a heartless poor-law relief." Philip Snowden deals in facts, not words. We can well afford to see how our situation looks to him.

FRENCH OFFICIALDOM, it now appears, has as little regard for accuracy in its publication of unemployment figures as some members of Mr. Hoover's Administration have shown. We were for many months led to believe that there was little or no unemployment in France. In its issue of February 4 *The Nation* stated that

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the number of unemployed workers in that country had "increased in the last three months of the year (1930) from 988 to 11,952, a gain of 1,000 per cent." These figures were based upon an official government report on the economic situation in France. In truth, however, at the very time this report was issued the number of unemployed totaled 350,000, with an additional 1,000,000 persons only partly employed, according to M. Piquenard, French delegate to the Conference on Unemployment, which met under the auspices of the League of Nations in Geneva late in January. In a formal statement he declared that the official figures were based only upon the number of workers applying for relief, but that as a matter of fact there were 250,000 persons more or less permanently unemployed, while 100,000 others were out of jobs as a result of the growing depression. The London *Times* comments that his "statement was wholly ignored by the Paris press, and was not generally reported to the foreign press." It must have gained some currency, however; for on February 12 Minister of Labor Landry revised the official figures sharply upward, reporting that on that day there were 90,000 persons wholly unemployed and 200,000 more only partly employed.

THE POLITICAL MANEUVERS of the last few weeks have all too plainly revealed that absolutism in Spain is a lost cause. Alfonso may still preserve the glory of the monarchy if he can come to terms with the moderate constitutional monarchists, who would strip him of his authority but retain him as king. However, by throwing in his lot with the absolutists and militarists, whose number is daily dwindling, and by making one of them, Juan Bautista Aznar, his new prime minister, he has made a last desperate play to keep both the power and the glory of the throne. Should he lose, he doubtless would lose both. The absolutists alone cannot keep Alfonso securely on his throne; they must be supported by the army, which up to this time has remained fairly faithful. On the other hand, the large majority of the political leaders, from the constitutionalists of Sanchez Guerra's stripe to the Socialists, Syndicalists, and Communists of the left, are opposed to absolutism, and these leaders are working day and night to overthrow Alfonso. The moderates who wish to retain a nominal monarchy appear to have the bulk of public opinion with them, and this gives them a weapon of considerable strength; the frankly republican left, representing the working classes, has what might prove to be a more effective weapon in its plans for a general strike. The monarchy could not for long withstand a determined assault from these two groups, and it may be doubted whether the army would hold firm against such an offensive.

GENERAL JUAN VICENTE GOMEZ, dictator of Venezuela, is building a "modern Babylon" at Maracay, according to a special correspondent for the New York *Times* who has visited this hitherto unreported wonder city. Gomez hopes by means of this development, the correspondent writes, "to attract visitors from all the Americas to see the fruit of his labors in the cause of progress and reconciliation." Sixty millions of dollars are being spent on public works; a chain of big hotels at key points has been planned; a vast port is being constructed at Furiamo. The writer tells further of "tinkling fountains," of "tables laid with flowers and silver," of "a Lucullan dinner with rare wines," and of "acres of empty public gardens ablaze with lights." Work is "proceeding night and day," he continues, "and when it is ready there will be docks and piers large enough to accommodate the world's biggest liners, boulevards lined with glittering department stores designed according to the latest Paris and New York ideas and filled with goods from the East and West." The other side of this amazing picture is described in a letter from Roger Baldwin which appears elsewhere in this issue of *The Nation*. The letter tells of cruelty and tyranny in Venezuela which are perhaps unparalleled in modern history.

ON A SMALLER SCALE than that of the Gomez dictatorship in Venezuela, but nevertheless equally vicious and despotic, the Trujillo dictatorship in Santo Domingo has been riding roughshod over the Dominican people. The excesses of President Trujillo's rule have been revealed in an able series of articles written for the Baltimore *Sun* by Drew Pearson, one of the foremost Washington correspondents. At least eleven of the opposition leaders have been assassinated, according to Mr. Pearson, and many others have been imprisoned or forced into exile. News of the Trujillo tyranny has been suppressed, and when an Associated Press reporter was sent to the Dominican Republic to report the recent presidential election he was, Mr. Pearson said, "brought before the court of the first instance in Santo Domingo City and an attempt was made to intimidate him." Trujillo has closed "270 primary schools, using the money thereby saved to increase the size of his army." He has removed members of Congress at will, and he has devoted foreign loans to military purposes. Doubtless aware of this situation, Secretary Stimson thus far has refused to approve a projected $5,000,000 loan to Trujillo. However, because of Washington's special relationship with Santo Domingo, which is virtually an American protectorate, this country's responsibility extends far beyond mere supervision of loans. Armed intervention is not necessary; a sharp and sincere protest from the State Department at Washington should suffice.

THE COWS OF NEW ENGLAND had better look to their butter fat. It is reported that Calvin Coolidge, no less, sometime President of the United States, now better known as a columnist of parts, may be asked by the milk producers of New England to be czar of the dairy industry in that section. Mr. Coolidge, the report goes on to say, would be offered a five-year contract carrying a salary of—$1,000,000! His job would be to stabilize the industry by forming a cooperative-marketing system which would "take in the farmers as well as the sellers" and stop cut-throat competition. Mr. Coolidge, when he was asked if he would accept such an offer, said with his usual restraint that he could make no reply until the offer was put before him by those concerned. As always, we wish Mr. Coolidge the best of luck. But we have certain fundamental doubts which may seem at first to be unrelated to the subject in hand. We doubt, for instance, that cows will ever learn to blow their horns. And when the farmers of New England pay some other New Englander $1,000,000 on a five-year contract for the stabilization, sight unseen, of anything, we shall begin designing props for Plymouth Rock.

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More Taxes, Not More Debt

THE ease with which the Treasury has been able during the past few months to float successive issues of short-term securities at low rates of interest has undoubtedly helped to confirm a great many people in the comforting belief that the finances of the government, notwithstanding the business depression, are in an entirely healthy state. On February 13, for example, the Treasury sold $150,000,000 of 91-day bills maturing later in the year. The advance subscriptions aggregated $347,532,000, and the amount actually allotted was $154,218,400. The heavy oversubscription would seem to indicate not merely that the credit of the government is good and that its securities are eagerly sought, but that the operation of borrowing money at low rates can go on indefinitely without occasioning any serious concern.

As a matter of fact, however, the Treasury situation is far from healthy. For the first time in years the Treasury is facing a deficit. On January 28 Secretary Mellon told the Senate Finance Committee that he looked for a deficit at the end of the present fiscal year (June 30) of $375,000,000, and that no debt reduction would be possible. On February 11 Undersecretary Ogden L. Mills predicted a deficit of "not less than" $500,000,000. Secretary Mellon may well feel anxious as he contemplates the huge volume of financing that will have to be managed in the near future. On March 15 the Treasury will have to be prepared to redeem $1,109,372,550 of 3½ per cent notes of the 1930-32 series, and while there has been some talk of a bond issue, no definite plans for redeeming these notes have yet been made public. On June 15 two large issues of Treasury certificates, one of $429,373,000 at 2⅞ per cent, and another of $159,941,000 at 1¾ per cent, mature. Within three years, Secretary Mellon informed Senator Hawley on January 16, some $8,000,000,000 in bonds, most of them bearing 4¼ per cent interest, become callable. Between July 1, 1930, and February 5 of the present year the Treasury put out $2,458,827,186 of new issues and retired $2,419,222,635, leaving a net addition to the debt of $39,600,551. The public debt, which stood at $16,163,268,237 on January 31, showed an increase of approximately $137,000,000 during that month.

What the issuance of short-term securities every few weeks, such as the $150,000,000 sold on February 13, amounts to is that the Treasury is borrowing to pay back what it has already borrowed, all the while falling a little behind. It will be, apparently, in one way or another, some $500,000,000 behind on June 30 next. For the redemption of the huge volume of bonds maturing in the course of the next three years it has no other resource save to replace the old issues with new ones, possibly at lower rates of interest, but without cutting down the principal of the debt. It is exactly this operation that is contemplated by the bill which Secretary Mellon submitted on January 5, and which was acted on favorably by the House on February 20, raising from $20,000,000,000 to $28,000,000,000 the amount of bonds that may be issued under the Second Liberty Loan Act.

Meantime Congress, apparently expecting that there would always be a surplus and that, even if there wasn't, things could be managed somehow, has gone on appropriating money with a lavish hand. It has just completed the sinking of $500,000,000 in a scheme of farm relief without giving the farmers any relief. It is committed to an indefinitely large outlay for Mississippi flood control, and has scattered millions right and left to relieve unemployment by means of road construction and public building. With the same gay confidence in the future it patted the country on the back with a 1 per cent reduction in the 1930 income taxes. Now, with business scraping bottom and struggling hard to rise, a persistent volume of not less than 5,000,000 unemployed, foreign trade declining, railway revenues heavily cut, a glutted world market for wheat, less and less demand for cotton, and an alarming record of bank and business failures, the Treasury faces a deficit of half a billion and a huge program of debt refunding.

In almost any other country in the world a financial predicament such as this would have been met not only by reduction of expenditure wherever such reduction was possible, but by a frank increase of taxation. Unfortunately, a tax increase has always been about the last thing to which Congress or the Administration has been willing to resort. Until the federal income tax was established, the United States relied upon tariff duties and excise taxes on liquors, tobacco, and a few other articles for all but an unimportant part of its revenue. The tariff, of course, was supposed to pluck the foreigner; liquor and tobacco taxes were all right because those articles were more or less wicked luxuries. Since 1911, however, internal-revenue receipts have run ahead of customs receipts, and since 1918 have been counted in billions where customs receipts reached only millions. As things stand, if the $9,000,000,000 that has been lopped off the debt since the peak of 1919 is not to go back again through recurring deficits, the country will have to go into its pockets and pay more taxes.

It is to this necessary increase in taxation that the new Congress should without hesitation address itself. There is no virtue whatever in carrying a national debt a day longer than the time needed to pay it, none whatever in saddling upon a distant future the indebtedness incurred by the present generation. With all allowance for the practical usefulness of credit or long-term financing, the generation that goes in for expenditure should pay for it. There is not only no reason why federal taxes should not be substantially increased, there is every reason why they should be and why the increase should be made at once. Barring the unavoidable hardships of exceptional situations, the rates of the federal income tax, from the lower to the higher brackets, are extremely low, and Congress should lose no time in raising them. There should certainly be no tolerance for the surtax exemption which Secretary Mellon wishes to have extended to the proposed new issue of eight billions of Second Liberty bonds; the exemption from normal tax is quite enough. The duty of the new Congress in this whole matter is clear.

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America's Follies

WHAT are the social and economic follies of America? Samuel Untermyer listed a number of them recently in addressing the University Club of Los Angeles. He declared that the country's meek toleration of the power trust, the money trust, and other widespread monopolies, its carelessness in handling its natural resources, and the blind trust it puts in government by ignorant and incompetent men must be considered as among its more serious errors. They are errors which *The Nation* has been criticizing editorially and otherwise for many years, and Mr. Untermyer has performed a service in warning the country against their continuance.

> Our standards of public service [Mr. Untermyer declares] are so perverted that true statesmanship rarely dares assert itself if it runs counter to the public delusion of the moment. It is because we are not sufficiently interested in the affairs of government and do not realize the very direct and often devastating effect upon our own individual fortunes of the ignorance of our representatives. Our form of government is neither democratic nor highly progressive. The truth is that it is not responsive to the will of the people.

Turning to the banking and credit situation, Mr. Untermyer says:

> As long ago as 1912, when I was acting as counsel for the Committee on Banking and Currency of the House of Representatives, which was then engaged in an investigation of whether there was in existence a money trust that controlled the money and credits of the United States, only a few of the great banks had these affiliated companies that were exploiting financial ventures in which the banks were prohibited from themselves engaging. Since then there have been hundreds of like perilous appendages to national and State banks that are using in speculative enterprises the funds of the banks of which they are in effect an integral part. Unless these subtle evasions of our banking system are prohibited, eventual major disaster is inevitable.

Despite this danger, we are still "allowing the American and State banking associations and their member banks to dictate and write the laws that govern them."

Mr. Untermyer was no less vigorous in attacking the weaknesses of the anti-trust laws, notably the Sherman Act.

> Spasmodic and unequal efforts at enforcement in isolated cases have served only to demonstrate that the powerful offenders against the law are stronger than the courts or the government, and so for every violator who has been prosecuted hundreds, perhaps thousands, have cropped up and are now operating and growing stronger and stronger in open defiance of the law. The only serious attempts at enforcement have been in the assaults on organized labor, to which the law was never intended to apply. . . . The trusts are now subject to no effective regulation.

It was for the power companies, however, that he reserved his most eloquent and most stinging criticism.

> The greed of the power trusts [he contended] is shaking the very foundations of government. We have the most striking example of this desperate, unequal struggle at the moment in my own State of New York between Governor Roosevelt and the most formidable power trust on earth. The much-coveted prize is the control of the vast American-owned lower Niagara Falls and St. Lawrence River water power.

Mr. Untermyer pointed out that ownership and control of the transmission lines supplied "the key to the situation." The trust, he said, was willing to have the State build the dams and converters, "which would relieve the trust of the burden of furnishing the bulk of the capital," but was determined to keep its own hands on the transmission lines, thus enabling it to "retain the control and profits of the enterprise by fixing the rates to its own distributors and their rates to the consumers."

Concluding, Mr. Untermyer declared:

> A struggle is raging in Congress and all over the country between government and these fabulous and perilous power combinations that are spreading their poisonous tentacles all over the land, undermining and shaking the very foundations of government. The evils of the industrial trusts that have conquered us as compared with the operations and effects of this form of legalized banditry are "as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine." Is their conquest to be added to the long list of America's follies? We shall see.

This appeal for better and more honest government and for protection against the "legalized banditry" of the power trust and big business comes from no young and hot-headed radical. It comes from an experienced lawyer who for fifty years has played an active and leading part in the development of this country. Will the people listen?

Farm Board Failure

CHAIRMAN LEGGE is leaving the Federal Farm Board, and it is reported that Messrs. McKelvie and Teague are shortly to follow him. Does the retirement of the fighting chairman mean that the board is perhaps to be eased gently out of the public view and that we are to be allowed to forget as fast as possible our great experiment in farm relief? At any rate, we shall not forget too promptly the half-billion dollars that we have tied up in the undertaking; and we ought not to forget that the Farm Board was the answer of President Hoover to the puzzling question of what could be done to end the distress of American agriculture.

When Mr. Hoover, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, rejected the export-debenture scheme, his feet were on solid ground. From that point forward, his agricultural policy has rested on thin air. In the days of piping prosperity culminating in 1929, the harassed farmers, rightly feeling the contrast of their own position with that of the industrial population of the country, exercised tremendous political pressure to get some kind of government help. Any comprehensive plan of agricultural development would have involved far-reaching economic changes, which the President and his supporters, as the party of big business, could not make. Instead, the President put forward the Farm Board scheme. Agriculture, we were told, was to be placed on a basis of "economic equality"—how? By promoting the ef-

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fective merchandising of agricultural commodities, and by protecting, controlling, and stabilizing the currents of commerce in the marketing of such products. The idea was not bad as far as it went, but it did not and could not go very far. The board was to prevent wasteful methods of distribution, to minimize speculation, to encourage cooperative marketing by farmers, and to aid in preventing and controlling agricultural surpluses. It was essentially a commercial program for agricultural salvation. To carry it out the board was given wide powers, and the disposal of a revolving fund of half a billion dollars.

The board has devoted its efforts largely to the encouragement of cooperative-marketing schemes of every sort. In its first year it made loans to cooperatives handling no less than nineteen different products, and it aided in setting up national cooperative sales agencies for grain, wool, cotton, live stock, beans, pecans, and beets—in doing so taking measures that in some cases deranged the existing marketing machinery seriously, even disastrously. Furthermore, acting through the grain and cotton stabilization corporations, it actively entered the wheat and cotton markets in a fatal effort to "stabilize"—in fact, to keep up—prices. With the vast funds at its disposal it acquired in its first year more than 60,000,000 bushels of wheat, and since November it has again been in the market, pegging the American price for the time being, with the aid of the tariff, at a point far above the world level. A statement from Chairman Legge would seem to indicate that the board's present holdings are nearly 200,000,000 bushels. On this wheat and on the 1,300,000 bales of cotton that it also holds it faces heavy losses. Despite its operations agricultural prices today are at the lowest point known since 1912—a condition for which the board, of course, is not to blame—and its report submitted in December expresses the judgment that the world trend of wheat prices is going to be downward for half a dozen years to come.

Cooperative marketing, however desirable it may be, is no specific for agricultural distress. The trouble goes deeper. The American farmer in every period of agricultural prosperity has loaded up with high-priced land which broke his back when prices swung down. Besides, there are burdens laid on him by obsolete tax systems for whose continuance he himself is largely responsible, by protection, by monopoly prices for many of the things he has to buy. The removal of such handicaps is a part of any adequate farm program, but beyond this the farmer has got to adapt his crops, his methods, his whole farm economy to the changing conditions of world life—to the rise of new wheat-growing areas, for example. The process is painful but unavoidable, and government efforts ought not to be devoted to vain schemes of price maintenance which take no account of such changes. Adjustment to the new conditions may well require cooperation and collective action going far beyond anything that we have yet contemplated. The progress of collectivized farming in Russia and of cooperative agriculture in other countries is raising serious questions regarding the successful continuance of any purely individualistic agriculture such as we have known in the past. If the Farm Board's efforts to encourage cooperative marketing can be used as a basis for building up an intelligently organized agricultural industry, we may yet save something out of the wreck of this experiment.

Generalities

POOR Mr. J. B. Priestley, visiting British author, got off to a bad start. Graciously answering every question put to him by the reporters on the day of his arrival, whether he knew anything of the subject of the inquiry or not, he remarked:

> I think the American people buy books when they are in fashion, but they do not read them so much. I remember when Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street" was selling at 20,000 copies a week here, a literary friend of mine was in New York and told me that he saw the book at every house he visited. By accident he opened a copy at one house in Fifth Avenue and found the leaves had not been cut. After that he tried every copy that he saw in private homes, and found the majority of them had not been read. In a few copies he found the first dozen pages had been cut.

Now before we accept Mr. Priestley's generalization about Americans we must point out one or two slight qualifications, and perhaps ask a question or two. To begin with, "Main Street" never had any pages to cut. In every edition the pages were machine-trimmed, top, bottom, and front. Mr. Priestley does not say whether his "literary friend" was an Englishman or an American, but in any case it seems to us that a man who will systematically snoop into one of his host's books, just for the purpose of informing other persons that his host did not read it, is something less than a perfect gentleman—and also something less than a perfect reasoner. For if the pages of "Main Street" *had* needed to be cut, and one found a copy in a private home in which the pages had not been cut, would that mean that the owner was never going to get around to reading the book at all, or simply that he had not *yet* got around to reading it?

But let us waive these perhaps hair-splitting quibbles, and assume that when Mr. Priestley's literary friend made it his business to repay his hosts' hospitality by assuring himself that none of them had read "Main Street," he always made a correct deduction. Let us be liberal and assume that he had drawn his conclusions from twenty-five separate homes (though it was more probably just one home). The original publishers sold 350,000 copies of "Main Street." Of these Mr. Priestley's literary friend had seen not 10 per cent, not even 1 per cent, but something less than one one-thousandth of 1 per cent. On the basis of this sample he drew his confident generalization. Mr. Priestley and his literary friend would not be very greatly harmed if they cut the pages of one or two good books on logic or scientific method.

There is no reason, however, why we should judge Mr. Priestley harshly. After all, he is only doing what nearly all of us do when we visit foreign countries and conclude after a week's stay that Frenchmen are this, Englishmen that, and so on. Count Keyserling illustrates the process *ad nauseam*. To contradict these generalizations is often as dubious logically and scientifically as to make them, for there are so many Frenchmen and so many Americans that any generalization that is true of human beings at all is almost certain to be true of *some* Frenchmen and *some* Americans. But when it comes to books one can almost afford to be dogmatic. There were no uncut copies of "Main Street."

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Young Bob La Follette

By MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

WHEN Robert Marion La Follette died a few years ago, reactionaries everywhere offered up a sincere though perhaps silent prayer of thanksgiving to their special bourbon heaven. At last they were delivered from this nonconformist who had had such queer ideas about the functions and responsibilities of government. Why, the man had actually believed that the government was the servant of the people, of all the people, rather than the other way around. Believing this, and aided by his remarkable political skill, he had annoyed and harassed the tories and their backsliding liberal friends for many a year. It is true that the reactionaries had in the end to accept many of his principles, but they did so grudgingly, unwillingly, giving the man little or no credit for his victories. They yielded inch by inch solely because they were compelled to, because Senator La Follette's philosophy and ideas were basically sound, and because he was a master of parliamentary strategy. Yet though they swallowed a large part of his program, they never overcame their fear of the man. When he died they were relieved. Other rebels might arise, would arise, but the reactionaries and the conservatives were reasonably certain that none would for many years to come cross their path who had the sincerity, forthrightness, ability, and political skill of "Fighting Bob" La Follette. As for the old Senator's sons, Young Bob and Phil—well, after all they were nice boys, but neither would ever fill his father's shoes.

Even among some of the progressives and liberals of the country with whom I discussed the matter in 1926 and 1927 there was nursed a sneaking suspicion that the La Follette boys would never quite measure up to the high standards set by their father. The less cautious among these persons whispered that the two sons were tied to their mother's apron strings. And they added, as though they had no doubt on this score, that the old, hard-hitting La Follette spirit had most assuredly died with "Fighting Bob."

Meanwhile Young Bob was working away patiently, earnestly, and quietly in the Senate at Washington. His progress at the start was slow, and there was nothing about it of the spectacular or sensational. His critics (among them outstanding progressives who now would be ashamed to admit it) pointed to the fact that whereas his father's untiring struggle in behalf of the popular causes in which he so deeply believed had gripped the imagination of ever-larger sections of the population, Young Bob was getting relatively little attention; certainly he was getting no newspaper publicity. This feeling, whether genuine or not, receded very slowly. The recession began with his presentation to the Republican convention at Kansas City of a most vigorous and uncompromising minority resolutions report. But it was not until December of last year that the whispering critics, not to mention the reactionaries and conservatives, were completely swept off their feet by Young Bob in a manner so typical of his father that a stranger in Washington might readily have believed the elder La Follette had returned to life to harass another Republican President who had dared ignore the public interest.

His critics had forgotten that Young Bob's political experience did not begin with his election to the Senate. It began when he was still a trifle damp behind the ears, toddling about Madison, sitting in as a member in his own right at the famous La Follette family discussions, listening to political wisdom from the lips of his father, his mother, and the several other persons who were privileged to join this circle. His education, with his father as tutor and mentor, continued throughout his boyhood and youth in Madison and Washington. During the four years before his father's death, Young Bob was his father's secretary, and in this capacity acted virtually as co-Senator when his father was absent or ill. In this manner he became an expert in the tactics of minority leadership. When, barely over thirty, he returned to Washington to carry on his father's work in the Senate, he was already thoroughly grounded in the La Follette principles, philosophy, and technique, he was already possessed of political training of a quality far superior to that of the average man entering Congress for the first time. Hence his striking success in the present session cannot be said to have been based on accident or good fortune; it was but the logical outcome of years of careful preparation.

In an earlier paragraph I suggested that Young Bob's manner was typical of the elder La Follette. But the parallel is not so simple and precise as that. Young Bob is not merely the son of his father. He has the older man's sincerity and directness; he has proved himself as able a political strategist; but he also has something his father lacked, and that is a fundamentally sound sense of economics. It is this attribute, in addition to his other qualities, that has made of Young Bob one of the few really important and influential members of the Senate today. In a few brief years he has become that dangerous opponent from whom the reactionaries and conservatives thought they had escaped when his father died.

It is true that the full measure of Senator La Follette's ability did not become generally known until the opportunity came to expose the hollowness and sham of Mr. Hoover's attitude toward the suffering workers and farmers of the country. Nevertheless, his quiet earlier years in the Senate were by no means fruitless or wasted, despite those loose-tongued persons who sought to ignore him or belittle his work. While it was being whispered in Washington that "Young Bob is simply drifting along on his father's reputation," he was in fact toiling unobtrusively but effectively, not in the political smoke of the Congressional cloakrooms, but in the committee rooms, where progressive measures were at stake, and on the floor of the Senate. There stand to his credit in the *Congressional Record* his speeches and votes against the power trust, against the improper use of injunctions in labor cases, against the Mellon campaign to abolish the federal estate tax and to undermine the income tax, against certain secret practices of the Executive, against secret consideration of Presidential nominations by the Senate (a successful fight which he led), against secret

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hearings on the tariff, and against the Federal Farm Board bill (which he opposed on the ground, borne out most convincingly by subsequent developments, that the bill did not represent an adequate agricultural program). He voted for the Muscle Shoals and Boulder Dam bills, for the Walsh resolution to investigate the public utilities, and for the motion to have the Senate rather than the Federal Trade Commission conduct this investigation. He worked actively in behalf of the Wheeler resolution for an investigation of labor conditions in the textile mills, and he was one of the leaders in the move to have the entire 1930 census organization placed under civil service, a move that was designed primarily to guarantee a greater measure of accuracy in the collection of employment and other labor statistics than could have been possible under a census taken by political appointees. He was a member of the Reed committee whose investigations resulted in the barring of Smith and Vare from Senate seats, and he was also a member of the committee that from 1926 to 1928 investigated the Tariff Commission. He exposed the gigantic combination of baking interests, turning up facts that compelled the dissolution of the Ward Food Products Corporation. He was one of the two or three leaders in the Senate who not only fought the extortionate rates of the Grundy tariff grab, but who also revealed the fallacy of giving a Presidentially controlled tariff commission the wide and perhaps largely unconstitutional powers with which it was clothed under the flexible provision of the new tariff act.

The foregoing activities might be said to constitute Senator La Follette's incidental record, but incidental only in the sense that his participation in the fight against the power trust, the bread trust, the tariff robbery, the injunction evil, corruption in government, and the Mellon campaign to relieve our wealthier citizens of their proper share of the tax burden might be considered of less importance than his independent and difficult battle against the Administration's cowardly attitude toward the country's economic and social problems. Young Bob launched his offensive against the Hoover ostrich policy, not after the country had been plunged into the present depression, but back in 1928 when prosperity was still with us and we were being led by the White House and the Treasury into believing that the boom would go on forever. Senator La Follette stood almost alone in attacking these optimistic but deceptive statements from the Administration. In 1928 he sought to induce the Senate to take the position that the Federal Reserve Board should curb speculative loans; in other words, while Calvin Coolidge was giving aid and comfort to the stock gamblers, Robert La Follette was giving repeated warnings of the disaster which was even then in sight. In December, 1929, after the crash had come, but while Herbert Hoover and his friends were still whooping it for prosperity and the good old days of the New Economic Era, Senator La Follette hammered away in opposition to the Hoover plan to put through an emergency tax reduction. Slashing taxes was no way, as he saw it and as the following twelve months pointedly demonstrated, to prevent depression or to bring about any improvement in the then uncertain business situation. In the face of expert advice to the contrary from the Treasury, he declared that the Hoover scheme did not represent sound fiscal policy. Secretary Mellon a week or two ago admitted as much himself in confessing that "the present condition of the public finances is far from being satisfactory."

Again, on the unemployment problem Senator La Follette went into action, not weeks or months, but at least two years ahead of the rest of official Washington. It was in the spring of 1928, a year and a half before the stock-market collapse, that he introduced and obtained passage of a resolution directing the Senate Committee on Education and Labor to inquire into various measures for the prevention of unemployment. Largely as a result of the committee's findings, which were reported in March, 1929, a majority of the Senate was convinced that constructive action was essential. The report finally paved the way for Senate passage of the Wagner bills in the spring of 1930. Throughout 1929, the last year of the bull market, and 1930, the first year of Hooverized depression, Young Bob kept up a running fire of speeches on the unemployment problem, coupling this with his campaign for more comprehensive and more accurate employment statistics. Finally, in December of last year, he launched his now famous drive against the Administration's cowardly disregard of the gravity of the unemployment and drought situations, a drive that compelled Mr. Hoover to admit by inference that he had been blocking relief for the jobless workers and the drought victims, and that brought to the attention of hundreds of thousands of grateful citizens the name of Robert M. La Follette, Jr., as one person in Washington who believes that the government has certain definite responsibilities to the people.

Senator La Follette took the initiative in demanding that a much larger and more adequate unemployment program be adopted than was envisaged by the few feeble measures put forward by the White House. Inasmuch as corrective and preventive measures, having been so long delayed, could be of little use in the pressing emergency of the moment, he insisted that large appropriations for direct relief were imperative. He collected statements as to conditions in many localities from the American Federation of Labor, and to obtain fuller information he joined with Senator Walsh of Massachusetts in circularizing the mayors of hundreds of cities to get first-hand data. This information, in the form of several hundred replies from municipal and other local officials, was presented to the Senate and published in the *Congressional Record* for December 15, December 20, and January 9. Young Bob used the letters to drive home his point that there was in fact, and not merely in his imagination, widespread suffering among large sections of the country's population. He proved that local relief funds could not meet the emergency. He challenged the White House and its apologists to show that the Hoover program was adequate to meet the needs of this situation.

However, the apologists arose to defend the President. Senator Goff of West Virginia contended that Congressional relief would impinge upon the sovereignty of the several States; Senator Hastings of Delaware questioned the authority of the Senate to buy food for the idle; Senator Watson asserted that the Red Cross was amply equipped to care for all the poor, hungry people in the country throughout the winter. Young Bob took up the objections one by one and disposed of them as only one other man, his father, could have done. He ended, to quote Elliott Thurston of the New York *World*, by forcing these apologists and Mr.

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Hoover "into the incredible position of seeming to object to feeding the hungry and clothing the needy lest the funds required for these worthy purposes be forced from the pockets of the nation's small and relatively rich taxpaying class, already the favorites of much Republican legislative solicitude."

Jim Watson's contention that the Red Cross was equal, both in spirit and in funds, to the great scope of the emergency brought from Young Bob the demand that Judge John Barton Payne, Colonel Arthur Woods, and certain government officials be called upon to demonstrate the effectiveness and adequacy of the Red Cross and Administration programs for relief. They were invited to appear before a Senate committee, but the evidence they presented was so weak that the Senate, without further persuasion, became convinced that Congressional action was necessary. Then, when it became apparent that the Senate would act, but not until then, Mr. Hoover and the Red Cross finally admitted that they were not doing a good job, and so was issued the appeal for a $10,000,000 fund—a confession, though a pitifully meager one, that Senator La Follette was right early in December when the Goffs and the Watsons attempted to cry down his demands for relief.

"The leadership in Congress, if any exists, should devote itself to the development of a program," Senator La Follette declared in addressing the Senate on January 9, "which will adequately meet" the unemployment and drought situations. There should be four points to this program, he asserted: first, "we should see that food and clothing are provided for the drought sufferers"; second, "prompt action should be taken upon some measure to give direct relief to the unemployed and their dependents"; third, "our public-works program for the next fiscal year should be expanded; let us not be caught again next winter in the situation in which we now find ourselves." The fourth point had to do with the need for a planned economy. Developing this fourth point, Young Bob said:

> Some attempt should be made on the part of Congress to afford the means for the mobilization of the intelligence of industry and finance in order that it may be brought to bear upon the problem of solving the question of distribution, as it has been brought to bear during the last ten years upon the problem of increasing the productivity of our present industrial organization. Unless we do that, economic conditions may be infinitely worse twelve months from now than today. . . . The Administration having failed to meet this crisis, Congress should devote its energies during the coming weeks to the enactment of a relief program and to the passage of constructive measures for the prevention of unemployment in the future. The time has come for Congress to assert its leadership.

This brief paragraph furnishes some measure of the economic statesmanship of Young Bob La Follette. He has dared to venture into a field which Mr. Hoover, after a few half-hearted sallies in that direction himself, declared to be closed to the government. Knowing the master political strategist that Senator La Follette is, and having observed the skill with which he operates in the Senate, one may hope that he will succeed in maneuvering the government into accepting fully the responsibilities which clearly belong to it in the matter of solving the economic problems touching all the people of the country. Senator La Follette has left his impress on the Congress just closing, and he will be on hand in the next session, and it is to be hoped for many more sessions to come, to supply the leadership necessary to carry his campaign through to successful completion. The tories of the Old Guard know this; they have come to fear him as much as they ever did his father.

Unemployment Relief in Germany

By OTTO BROK

Berlin, February 1

THE rising demand in the United States for a plan of caring for the unemployed directs attention to systems in other countries. A description of the German system may be of interest. There are at present about 4,765,000 unemployed in Germany. All but 800,000 receive assistance in some form at an annual cost of $630,000,000. A large proportion of this expense is borne by the taxpayers, the rest by the workers and employers. At present 2,400,000 unemployed receive insurance (the insurance is paid for only a limited time after employment ends), 700,000 live on the emergency fund provided for in the federal budget, and 630,000 are supported by the welfare departments of the cities. It is probable that the villages extend financial help to about 150,000 unemployed; the remaining 900,000 (nearly) do not receive any doles. So far the majority of the unemployed have been supported by insurance, but the percentage of the recipients of emergency and welfare doles is continually increasing. By the end of April about 2,000,000 will probably be existing on emergency and welfare doles.

Underlying this protection of the unemployed is undoubtedly the idea that a civilized state in the last analysis is responsible for the existence, if not for the prosperity, of each of its citizens. Yet when the idea first took shape, it was supposed that it would be not a form of organized and obligatory charity, but a strict insurance under state control. Today the protection of the unemployed is intrusted to three separate units, of which two are financed entirely by taxes and the third, the insurance proper, has been kept going only by state loans which have been transformed into gifts and by direct subvention. In other words, the insurance system, confronted with an unheard-of crisis, has proved unequal to its task, despite repeated modifications. By reason of recent reforms, however, it is now expected that in the coming fiscal year the system will begin to function as a self-supporting institution.

Unemployment insurance was instituted in Germany in October, 1927. A great desire of the Socialist Party had been fulfilled; unemployment seemed to have lost much of its horror. The new service was closely modeled after the public illness insurance—it was made compulsory for all

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workmen and employees earning less than a fixed maximum ($2,000) a year, and it bound the employer to pay part of the insurance fee (one-half in the case of unemployment insurance as against one-third for illness insurance). At the beginning the premium was fixed at 3½ per cent of the nominal weekly wage. That is, the workman had to pay 1.75 per cent of his wage and the employer had to contribute the same amount. Since then the premium has been raised to 6½ per cent, or 3.25 per cent for each. The weekly dole to which the jobless worker has a legal claim is normally 30 to 50 per cent of his former wage, though it may vary even more than that. An unmarried worker under fifty-two whose weekly wage was $10, for example, gets a benefit of $3.40, while a married man over fifty-two with a large family, if his weekly wage was as much as $14.35, receives a benefit of $8.90, the maximum provided.

This dole, small as it may appear to Americans, was nevertheless quite out of proportion to the revenue available. In fact, the legal and financial basis of the system has been unsound from the outset. The first serious wave of unemployment in the fall of 1928, exactly one year after its foundation, would have wrecked it had not the federal Treasury granted considerable loans. By April of last year the insurance fund was indebted to the Reich to the amount of $150,000,000 and was in a state of chronic deficit. In order to extricate the insurance system from its financial muddle, the federal Cabinet resolved not only to renounce the Reich's claim but also to grant a subvention of $80,000,000 for the fiscal year ending April 1, 1931. A few weeks later another $40,000,000 was given *à fond perdu*. For a time it looked as if the growing unemployment deficits must wreck the federal finances.

As I have already pointed out, there was an enormous disproportion between expenditure and revenue. A total of $450,000,000 was spent in 1930, of which $430,000,000 was paid out in doles—roughly $20,000,000, or less than 5 per cent of the expenditure, went to administration costs, a record which compares favorably with other public insurance. But the revenue was only $250,000,000, that is, $200,000,000 less than the expenditure. The ultimate result of such a development could be easily foreseen, but as long as the Reichstag was the only authority dealing with insurance affairs, nothing was done to avert a breakdown. It was impossible to find a majority for reform. The Socialists wanted an increase in insurance rates, the bourgeois members voted against it; the right wanted to cut down the doles, the left opposed. Not until the present Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, initiated his dictatorial regime under Article 48 of the constitution was a serious attack on the problem undertaken. By his first emergency decree in July last year, the Chancellor raised the insurance rate from 3½ to 4½ per cent and also made minor cuts in benefits. In October he again raised the rate from 4½ to 6½ per cent. At the same time it was decided that the system should be put on a self-supporting basis. Accordingly, after April 1, 1931, no further loans or subventions will be granted.

A period free of deficits therefore seems assured. With the premium rate at 6½ per cent of the nominal weekly wage and with about 15,000,000 wage-earners contributing, revenue to the amount of about $430,000,000 per annum is assured, which will be sufficient to pay doles to about 2,000,000. And since there is only a small chance that the average number of claims over a period of years will ever reach 2,000,000, the insurance fund may be able to accumulate modest reserves. Or it may be possible to cut the rate, which is generally considered too high.

With this provisional reorganization of unemployment insurance the danger spot of the German system has shifted to the emergency assistance and municipal welfare. In 1930 the emergency assistance paid out about $80,000,000, appropriated for the purpose in the federal budget, for the maintenance of those unemployed whose claim to insurance had run out. The emergency dole paid to the individual normally amounts to about 75 per cent of his former insurance dole, but he has a legal claim to emergency assistance only if he has no private means. Strictly speaking, therefore, emergency doles are, like welfare contributions, charity doles. Originally designed as a temporary help in times of bad business, they have become a permanent institution. In the federal budget an appropriation of $100,000,000 is provided for the emergency fund. But unless business looks up considerably, the number of unemployed having a claim on emergency doles will continue to increase so that the average of 1931 will be at least double that of 1930.

Even more precarious is the situation of the municipal welfare service, owing to the critical financial state of most large German cities and to the constantly increasing number of unemployed demanding help. The peculiar coordination of insurance, emergency fund, and welfare services implies a constant shifting from the first to the second to the third. When some time in March this year unemployment in Germany will have reached its climax and either becomes stationary or, what is more likely, recedes, this recession will help only the insurance service; it will not relieve the emergency fund or lessen the burden of the municipal welfare d partments. Those who receive unemployment-insurance doles, that is, those who have been out of a job only for a short while, will be the first to find new employment, since they normally form the elite of the unemployed. Furthermore, a steadily growing percentage of the jobless workers, having exhausted their claim on insurance and emergency doles, will be dependent on the municipal-welfare contribution, which, though it varies from city to city, normally amounts to about 50 per cent of the insurance dole. An idea of this shifting is given in the following table, which shows the number, in thousands, now being supported by the three services:

	Insurance	*Emergency Assistance*	*Municipal Welfare (Including Villages)*
January, 1930	2,063	230	280
November, 1930	1,787	566	510
January, 1931	2,400	700	780

It is obvious that the reorganization of unemployment insurance must be followed by reform of the municipal welfare service. And this reform cannot be put off for long, for a great number of cities are already on the verge of bankruptcy, and the breakdown of city finances would have serious consequences. If a number of large cities are unable to care for their unemployed this spring, law and order will be maintained only with difficulty. In the face of this danger the municipal authorities are pressing for a reform.

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They rightly contend that the present system not only is bound to crash very soon, but that it is a source of social injustice as it puts the heaviest burden on those cities which suffer most from unemployment. The central organization of the German cities, the Städtetag, has recently proposed to do away with all municipal unemployment contributions and to pay all those unemployed who no longer have a claim on insurance doles out of the emergency fund. Such a solution may be sound but it would mean fresh burdens on the Treasury.

The Cabinet has not yet disclosed its plans and seems in no hurry to do so. There is method in its tactics. A certain antagonism exists between the Reich and the cities. For instance, one of the principal functions of the Brüning Cabinet so far has been the liquidation of a number of costly Socialist reforms. Meanwhile the cities, most of which are under Socialist control, cling to their policy of expanding municipal activity. Influential persons in the federal Cabinet want to bring about radical curtailment of municipal expenditure. Some even aspire to dictatorship over the cities. The Reich, by withholding help for a time in the present crisis, may be able to exercise more power over the cities. But in any case new federal funds will eventually have to be provided for unemployment relief.

True Stories de Luxe

By MILTON ST. JOHN

IT was late in 1928, as I remember, when *Time* announced for publication early in 1930 a new monthly magazine to be called *Fortune*. *Fortune* was to be a new departure. Let me quote from the descriptive announcement:

> *Fortune's* purpose is to reflect Industrial Life in ink and paper and word and picture as the finest skyscraper reflects it in steel and stone and architecture.
>
> Business takes *Fortune* to the tip of the wing of the airplane and through the depths of the ocean along bebarnacled cables. It forces *Fortune* to peer into dazzling furnaces and into the faces of bankers. *Fortune* must follow the chemist to the brink of worlds newer than Columbus found and it must jog with freight cars across Nevada's desert. *Fortune* is involved in the fashions of flappers and in glass made from sand. It is packed in millions of cans and saluted by boards of directors on the pinnacles of skyscrapers. Mountains diminish, rivers change their course, and thirty million people assemble nightly at the cinema.
>
> Into all these matters *Fortune* will inquire with unbridled curiosity. And, above all, *Fortune* will make its discoveries clear, coherent, vivid, so that the reading of it may be one of the keenest pleasures in the life of every subscriber.

This unique publication was not designed for newsstand sale. Its price was a dollar a copy—by subscription ten dollars a year. Advertising was solicited in advance on the basis of a guaranteed circulation of 30,000 copies for the first issue. In other words, the publishers assured themselves of a gross revenue of $300,000 from subscriptions alone before going to press. And since subscriptions were solicited primarily if not entirely by mail, it was unnecessary to pay high commissions for them. Add to this about 120 pages of advertising in the first issue, at an average net of about $1,000 per page, and this publishing venture itself became, indeed, something to be "saluted by boards of directors."

And what did the subscribers get for their money?

They got a magazine whose format was almost as amazing as its contents. Even the page size, 11¼ by 14 inches, was an innovation. The reading matter was set in two or three columns, and illustrated with square-finish photographs—the MacFadden *True Story* method—in intaglio. The net effect was that of rotogravure on an antique-finish paper, with occasional colorgravures. At first glance this format was startling; at second glance, vaguely annoying; at third, irritating. Irritating because of its mechanistic squareness, its spurious and synthesized color effects, its monotonous and inflexible rigidity of layout, its cruelty to optic nerves. But at first glance it was undeniably and emphatically startling. Callers and employees would be properly impressed, would look in childish amazement at the pictures. It was a fairly safe bet also that few would read it.

Yet unquestionably the editorial content of *Fortune* is its outstanding point of interest, of significance, and of amazement. Let us examine a few issues.

The opening article of the first issue bears the following subtitle: "The packer does more for less money than any other industrialist. Herein his business is described with special reference to pigs and to Swift and Company, which has just entered the billion-dollar class."

The next article deals with group and branch banking. It is indorsed by Andy Mellon. And why not? Did not Mr. Hoover donate his own services and have special two-cent stamps issued for the Golden Jubilee of Light, a grand piece of advertising for General Electric? Did he not, on November 8, 1930, broadcast a speech dedicating an employees' recreation building to the greater glory of H. J. Heinz and Company?

To proceed: it seems, according to *Fortune*, that big business has its lighter moments, too. It can relax and have its share of fun in privately owned island retreats far from the mockery of its wage slaves. Island Kingdoms tells of some thirty such privately owned islands, many of which, it hastens to add, yield profit as well as pleasure. The pleasure is well summed up by the appraisal of Mouse Island, off the coast of Maine, given by its part-owner, the Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick: "It is far enough from the mainland so that we can live an entirely unsophisticated life; that is to say, a man can put on a flannel shirt in the morning and go to bed in it at night if he feels like it."

An article discussing the revenues, disbursements, and profits of the Biltmore Hotel in New York yields in interest to the story of how big business has transformed an idler's hobby and a debutante's luxury—the orchid—into a thriving industry with a cool profit of nearly a million a year. The title is most apropos: When Wall Street Buys Orchids, Wall Street Makes Money.

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An article on the Rothschild family points out that while "nobody sneers at them because they are Jews," they were really not very clever, since they never invested a penny in America. It continues: "Society may rejoice in the increase of a tribe so consistently intelligent and colorful; but, so far as the fortune is concerned, there are, at last, too many Rothschilds."

Finally, we are shown in a graphic and moving document the impossibility, for a young married couple, of living in Chicago society on $25,000 a year. In a subsequent issue was printed a reply to this article from an expatriated American connected with the commercial end of the diplomatic service in Athens. This enterprising individual countered the Chicago budget with a set of figures showing that a family of five could do very nicely in Athens and take occasional vacations in other parts of Europe on a mere $17,000 a year. I know of no ambassador, let alone a commercial attaché, who gets anything like $17,000 per annum from our government, but that is beside the point. Let us go on to another issue in which a New Yorker complains that he has to spend all of his $50,000 income and cannot save a cent.

> . . . $40,000 very nicely takes care of our actual New York necessities. . . . The rest must do . . . for our necessary niceties. We buy no pearls when we cannot afford them, and there are other coats than mink. But the incidentals always claim virtually the entire amount above $40,000. There is little reason, unless sumptuously we build a yacht, why incidentals should ever cost more than $10,000 or $15,000. When and if I make $75,000, I shall, therefore, save. If I make $300,000—why, I shall yacht.

The value of these three case histories to sociologists and economists interested in standards of living need hardly be pointed out.

Fortune, like *Time,* refers habitually to "tycoons." What are they anyhow? My "Oxford Dictionary" says that the term "tycoon" was a title applied by foreigners to the shogun of Japan in 1854-68; it is an Anglicization of the Japanese word *taikun,* meaning great prince. *Fortune* and its parent, *Time,* have apparently redefined it as applying to the millionaires of commerce. The inference seems to be that these are our great princes, and that no others count.

Fortune says, Long live the tycoon! He it is whose financial tiddledywinks insures an active stock market and the consequent prosperity of American industry, which insures the happiness of labor by gambling away its profits. He it is whose foibles and fortune make and unmake nations. He it is whose bigger and better mergers send stock-market prices skyward by reducing costs—and the armies of labor. May his race increase, for he alone is the American man of destiny! And *Fortune* does its bit by heaping encomiums upon them. Major Atterbury, A. R. Erskine, Baron Mitsui, M. Coty, the Behn brothers, the Guggenheims, the Mellons, Albert Wiggin, F. L. Carlisle, John Henry Patterson, Elisha Walker, Owen D. Young—all have their place, along with statements of the profits that accrue from salt mining (Morton's Salt), sporting goods (Spalding), the manufacture of Pullman cars, soap (Proctor and Gamble, Lever Brothers, Colgate-Palmolive-Peet), cosmetics (Coty, Helena Rubinstein), aluminum (Aluminum Company of America).

In edifying and informative photographs we may see ex-Governor Alfred E. Smith eating "boloney"; Lydia Pinkham and her great-granddaughter; the shoulders and arms of Primo Carnera, which earned him $103,991 in less than four months; a procession of hogs across the slaughtering floor of the stockyards; or the Homesburg County Prison Band, with instruments, be it noted and underscored, donated by a tycoon.

Fortune has its cultural side, too. The talkie version of "All Quiet on the Western Front" recently "grossed $22,800 in a Manhattan theater" in a single week; "Toscanini leads an American enterprise [the New York Philharmonic] to triumph and a deficit"; the decrepit American back yards immortalized in the water colors of Charles Burchfield can yield, in Manhattan alone, "rubbish, garbage, ashes, and dead animals" convertible into a neat $5,000,000 by proper garbage reduction; had the first buyer of Rembrandt's Toilet of Bathsheba "kept his $106 banked at 4 per cent interest compounded semiannually, his estate could now withdraw $242,428.89. Had he kept Bathsheba, his estate could probably realize a great deal more. For . . . there is no telling what sum she might now command."

It would be unfair, no doubt, to suggest that glorified success stories about tycoons and their profit-producing enterprises are consciously designed to encourage the purchase of securities in these undertakings. But let us look at *Fortune* for November, 1930. A full-page advertisement for Stone and Webster and Blodget, the financing end of Stone and Webster, Inc., appears on page 16; an illustrated article on Stone and Webster on pages 97 to 98 is continued on page 121. In getting there, the reader can hardly overlook an advertisement of the Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation which appears on page 115.

Finally, *Fortune,* realizing that its readers are not so deeply interested in the workings of a business or in the alleged idiosyncracies of its directors as they are in the behavior of its securities on the stock market, publishes in its latter pages a supplement analyzing the earnings, structures, and speculative possibilities of these securities.

The circle is complete. Not even a St. Anthony could resist this elephantine innuendo. And while it is not yet "packed in millions of cans"—the circulation guaranty for 1931 is 40,000 average net paid per month—it is already something to be "saluted by boards of directors."

Her Pain

By LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

Her pain became the pressure of a lover
Without whose weight she would have been too light,
A hand laid on her that her hand could cover,
A voice speaking to her in the night.
Her pain would strongly cling to her forever,
Moving in her body like a child
That only Death had courage to deliver.
So life and she were mutely reconciled
Since this imperious, dependent guest
Came home to her, so welcome, strange, and late,
By whom she was recurringly possessed,
To whom she was a mother and a mate.
Now she was bound forever to her friend,
Her very bones a house built to that end.

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A Dirt Farmer Wonders

By GLENN W. BIRKETT

I

ON December 27, 1929, Mr. Alexander Legge of the Federal Farm Board gave an address before the American Farm Economics Association at Washington, D. C. From this address it appears that the practical problem of the Farm Board is to restrict production of farm products. Mr. Legge states:

> You will find the argument for curtailment of production very unpopular with the farmer as a rule. But it is reasonable to suppose that in time he may grasp the simple problem that if he can get more money for four bushels of wheat than he can get for five bushels, perhaps he will raise four bushels of wheat instead of five. That is a typical illustration of where we stand today. A 20 per cent reduction, on an average, of what the farmer produces would make the tariff on grain effective, and give him a higher level of prices. I think it is conservative to say that 20 per cent less production would bring 20 per cent more money than he is now getting for what he produces.

Mr. Legge is a representative of the federal government. He and his board have, by act of Congress, large powers and $500,000,000 to raise the prices of farm products, that is, to *decrease* production. About the time of Mr. Legge's speech in Washington, Professor James E. Boyle of Cornell, in one of the quality magazines, was portraying vividly the danger of starvation because of the destruction by insects of a part of our food supply. To illustrate our appalling nearness to defeat in our race with the insects, Professor Boyle quotes Professor Glenn Herrick, an agricultural "if" statistician, who finds that a single mother cabbage aphid in a single short season in the somewhat unfavorable climate of New York State ought to be, *if* all her descendants lived, and *if* all could be fed, the ancestress of so many hundred quadrillion aphids that by the middle of August the weight of the generation or generations then alive would be eight times the weight of all the human inhabitants of the globe. In a warmer region, such as Texas, where the climate allows thirty generations instead of twelve as in New York, the resulting total would stagger even an "if" statistician.

One reads on to learn that the farmer is being aided by government appropriations in his fight against the insects. Obviously this work is designed to *increase* production. In other words, the Bureau of Entomology of the Department of Agriculture, with 545 entomologists, and with the prestige and taxes of the federal government behind it, is determined to prevent the insects from doing, in part at least, the very thing that Mr. Legge, backed by the taxes and prestige of the same government, is attempting to do. Penelope, knitting by day and raveling by night, had nothing on the government at Washington.

One of the reasons given for building Boulder Dam with federal taxes is that it would make possible a large reclamation project and an increase of agricultural production. I have scores of pamphlets from my State experiment station, from other States, and from Washington all urging increased production. These are paid for out of taxes. Professors of agricultural colleges everywhere are lecturing and broadcasting on the necessity for increasing the yield per man, per acre, per cow, per hen.

As a farmer, I am confused. I cannot reconcile the use of tax millions to stimulate production and the use of other millions at the same time to educate the farmer to produce less. I am not considering whether the stimulators actually increase production, or whether Mr. Legge's millions can check production, but I do ask which of these two—if either—is farm relief? If either one constitutes farm relief, why would not additional relief be secured by the withdrawal of tax money from the other? If the professors who insist upon more per man, per acre, per cow, per hen are right, then the $500,000,000 of Mr. Legge are worse than wasted; whereas if Mr. Legge is right, then the taxes spent by the government to reclaim land, prod the farmer, and fill the ether with fairy tales about scientific production are merely an additional handicap which Mr. Legge and the Farm Board must overcome—at government expense. At present the Department of Agriculture and the Farm Board seem to be equal in authority. Each is a legally established department of the federal government. One prods, the other restrains. The theory of one is the exact opposite of the other. Millions for one must be counterbalanced by millions for the other. The two sets of relievers relieve us of billions.

II

At the close of Mr. Legge's address a number of questions were asked:

> DR. H. C. TAYLOR. What is the plan for limiting the production? How could you go about that, say, in wheat and corn?
>
> MR. LEGGE. That is up to the gentlemen in the agricultural colleges of the country. It calls for a campaign and it can never be done except as the farmers become organized and where the story can go back home to the farmer. *There is no way you can do it by legislation under the Constitution* of this country, and I doubt if it can be done anywhere. You cannot compel the farmer but perhaps you can convince him. If he gets more money for producing a little less it may have an argument that will reach him in the course of time but it cannot be done in a hurry.
>
> DR. B. H. HUBBARD. Is there any hope of doing that while the farmers are unorganized, if you had even half of them, as they have in Canada, educated to produce less?
>
> MR. LEGGE. Well, that reaches almost any limit, you know the possibilities. I remember a number of years ago out in San Joaquin Valley in California, at the time they were reorganizing the grape industry, that problem existed, and the *persuasive action of these organized farmers perhaps was not in strict accord with the laws of the country, but they were very effective.* In other words, a producer either joined it or moved out.

Here is a simple direct idea proffered by a great industrialist. The implication seems vicious but possibly the idea is good. Racketeering seems to work in urban industry,

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particularly in Chicago, although Mr. John Gunther pointed out more than a year ago that the ultimate cost to the community is high. But now that an official of the government has indorsed this modern business practice, which, as Mr. Gunther indicated, is racketeering or "high finance" according to the social and financial standing of the indorsers, we may expect some action from farmers. Heretofore we have been handicapped by respect for law and have been slow to realize the efficacy of strikes, lock-outs, bombings, and other concomitants of efficient businesses. Still we have made some progress. Two summers ago, during a milk strike in this, the Chicago dairy region, armed farmers halted trucks and dumped out the milk. Several years ago near Belvidere the "persuasive action" of dairymen in restricting output resulted in one killing. The farmer is copying urban efficiency but possibly too slowly. Mr. Legge's left-handed federal support to extra-constitutional, extra-legal methods may have an accelerating effect.

But many of us farmers are puzzled. According to the President of the United States, obedience to all the laws is particularly necessary just now if we are to maintain our civilization. The Wickersham Commission is appointed to study crime and offer remedies. Then the head of the Farm Board, who is just as officially the government as is the head of the commission to study lawlessness, suggests that "persuasive action . . . not in strict accord with the laws of the country" be adopted. It is interesting and possibly enlightening as the solution of a great industrialist. Remember that Mr. Gunther wrote that "racketeering exists because people, prominent people, want it to exist."

It opens possibilities. Most farmers I know disbelieve in all efforts of government artificially to stimulate or restrict. (And I have the opinions of many farmers, not only from this section but from other States from Massachusetts to California.) If it is right to use force against a fellow-farmer to restrain his productive effort, then it must be right to use force against those government employees or representatives whose efforts are designed to stimulate his productive effort. For instance, would not a farmer be justified and could he not plead page 13 of Mr. Legge if he, the farmer, attacked a government entomologist, or a barberry-bush destroyer? We ought to have an opinion on that. But it will have to come from somebody higher up than either Secretary Hyde or Chairman Legge. They would obviously disagree, since their objectives are opposite.

We farmers have a solution of the farm problem. It consists of recognizing that any form of farm aid is harmful, and it therefore asks the complete withdrawal of all units of government from all phases of farming, from all stimulation and from all restriction. Our solution is absurd. It gives no one a government job. It assumes that ordinary citizens have rights as opposed to bureaucrats.

But whether or not we who are farmers are right in our plea for no more government aid or relief of any kind, this query remains: How can the government logically appropriate hundreds of millions with the ostensible purpose of increasing production and at the same time hundreds of other millions to decrease production? And how can the government logically preach through one commission the vital need for respect and obedience to all statute laws, while through another board it recommends group or class advancement to be attained through disregard of the most fundamental laws?

In the Driftway

MARIE ANTOINETTE'S cake-eating formula has always been popular with those who have sufficient bread. The Drifter recalls, for instance, that public-spirited Bostonian who long ago founded a Union at Harvard "where the poorest student could get a good luncheon for seventy-five cents." There was also the altruistic lady who, wishing to experience for herself "how the other half lives," invited herself to visit in the home of an unsuspecting college professor. For ten days the household put its best foot forward, striving to maintain its maximum of hospitality—only to be thanked by the lady for letting her "share in the simple life." It is not only the Drifter who remembers, in the First Hoover Epoch, the smartly dressed women who went about among the poor telling them how to conserve food in war time by preparing dishes from bread crumbs—to meet the invariable question, "Yes, lady, and where do we get the bread crumbs?" No less a person than good George the Fifth was acclaimed for his discovery that left-over bread could be toasted—thereby proving his royal descent from good King Arthur and his queen: "And what they could not eat that night, the queen next morning fried."

* * * * *

AESOP'S Fox—offering the Stork food on a flat plate—was probably the first incarnation of this generous spirit which a sadder world has seen transformed through Lady Bountiful to Social Service and finally to Research Bureau. But Aesop at least let the Stork get back at the Fox, a wholesome balance which has not survived to our day. (Can it be that the Fox finally ate the Stork?) The Drifter is quite sure he knows how the Stork felt, for once when he had been tramping over the Yorkshire moors he stopped to rest at a holiday house maintained by one of the city settlements. A resident had invited him to spend the night. There was no other shelter for miles, so the invitation was happily accepted. The sight of the table spread for supper was good to a dinnerless man. The hospitable resident withdrew to break the news to the housekeeper, who came in looking as if something else had been broken as well. She looked the Drifter down and up, or rather down than up, and said sternly, "You'll have to go on—there's a farm a few miles on." Perhaps she noticed the pathetic droop the Drifter was trying to produce, for she continued, "You may sit and rest half an hour but *don't touch any of the food on the table!*"

* * * * *

THE Fox spread only one unattainable dish before the hungry Stork. In our splurging days we multiply both the dish and the unattainability. The Drifter, with one eye on the weary bread line shivering on the sidewalk, reads what a beneficent government (of the Second Hoover Epoch) suggests as a low-cost menu for "Minimum Standard Diet for Lower Incomes": "The list demands milk for the children and bread for all at every meal; cereal, potatoes, a green or yellow vegetable, and some additional fruit or vegetable for all, and for children, tomatoes or oranges

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every day; with tomatoes, dried beans or peas or peanuts, lean meat, fish, or poultry, or cheese, and eggs, from two to four times a week." The Drifter concludes that it is not only in the Arabian Nights that the Barmecide spreads an imaginary feast for the hungry to sharpen their teeth on. But Shacabac in the immortal tale had a come-back at the Barmecide. What come-back, or what deferred meal, is coming to those who dine on the paper menu "issued by the Home Economics Bureau of the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Emergency Committee for Employment"? *Gesegnete Mahlzeit.*

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Terror Still Reigns in Venezuela

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: For almost thirty years Juan Vicente Gomez has succeeded in maintaining a brutal dictatorship in Venezuela. He has been materially assisted by Dutch, British, and American warships which patrol the coast of the second largest oil-producing country in the world. All political opponents of the dictatorship have either fled the country, or been exiled, killed off, or sent to prison. It has been estimated that upwards of 5,000 political prisoners crowd the filthy Venezuelan jails today, 100,000 are in exile, and 15,000 have been killed, not for acts of violence but for political activities against the dictatorship.

Horrible tortures are inflicted on the inmates of the ancient Venezuelan prisons. The following statement made by four escaped political prisoners appeared in the San Juan, Porto Rico, *Times*, on August 1, 1930:

> By orders of Juan Vicente Gomez, one, two, three sets of irons . . . weighing from 30 to 100 pounds are riveted on to a human being without so much as a trial or defense. The physical resistance of [many of these] men cannot withstand these for more than a few days . . . gangrene sets in, and suffering indescribable pain and torture, the prisoner passes from the jail to the cemetery. . . . Many times there have been riveted into a single set of irons two people; night and day, year after year, they have remained bound together by that infernal chain. Death only will free them from that odious enforced association. . . . The students of the University of Caracas—about five hundred in number—have been condemned by Gomez to hard labor on the highways without clothing, hungry, maltreated by the lash of the hangman, weighted with chains.

Evidence indicating that American oil interests have secured for Gomez the support of the Department of State was produced before both houses of Congress, and resolutions calling for an investigation of our relations with Venezuela were introduced last year. There is a way to help end this infamous political persecution. Write to Henry W. Temple, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, asking that Resolution No. 269 be reported out of committee. There is a good chance that something can be accomplished. Hearings will determine whether the charge that oil companies have secured the support of our government are true. Citizens who feel that the United States has no business supporting dictatorships, and presenting their governments with statues of Henry Clay (ironically placed near the Rotunda prison), ought to protest in the interests of a people submerged for almost thirty years under oil and a tyrant.

New York, February 18 ROGER BALDWIN

The Making of a Pacifist

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: William Lloyd Garrison's far-reaching influence is illustrated by an incident of my school days. More than fifty years ago the Japanese government sent a number of boys to be educated in the United States. One of them was my classmate at the Chauncy Hall school in Boston. His name was Taykichi Tanaka, which means, in Japanese, Sublime Virtue. He was a very fine young fellow. He came of an old and warlike noble family and was destined for a responsible post in Japan's war navy.

He wanted to meet William Lloyd Garrison. My parents gave him a letter of introduction, and I took him to Mr. Garrison's house. Mr. Garrison talked to him against war, and lent him Dymond's "Essays on Morality." I can recall the worshipful expression on his face as he stood on the doorstep taking leave, and looking up at Mr. Garrison, who stood in the doorway above him.

On his return to Japan he refused the post in the war navy to which he was assigned. He was put in prison for his contumacy, but he stood firm. Finally he was released and was given some small post of a peaceful kind, with a salary that would barely keep him from starving.

He died many years ago; but my early friendship with him and esteem for him gave me a respect for the Japanese that has lasted all my life.

Boston, February 20 ALICE STONE BLACKWELL

Mr. Rosoff Was Not a Director

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In my article The Banks of New York, which appeared in *The Nation* on February 11, I stated that Mr. Samuel Rosoff was a director of the Bank of United States. Mr. Rosoff informs me that he at no time was a director of the bank although a very heavy stockholder. I should greatly appreciate it if you would print this correction.

New York, February 16 NORMAN THOMAS

The Case of Guido Serio

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: As the attorney for Guido Serio, I take serious exception to the suggestion in Mr. John Beardsley's letter in your issue of February 4 that the courts are powerless to secure Serio the voluntary departure which the Labor Department has refused. Mr. Beardsley is apparently convinced that everyone "after further inquiry" must agree with his conclusion that the Labor Department has the last say as to where a deportable alien must be sent.

The Circuit Court of Appeals in New York, dealing with the case of another anti-Fascist, Mario Giletti, expressed grave doubt on this very question. Judge Learned Hand gave serious attention to the argument advanced by the alien—that if he left at his own expense for some other country, the deportation warrant should remain unexecuted. Judge Hand said that the statute fixing the place to which the alien was deportable

> . . . may then be understood as meaning only that, when deported *in invitum*, the alien must go to one of the prescribed countries but it need not be executed when the same result is accomplished by his going elsewhere.

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This appears to us certainly a humane construction to put upon the statute, and we will not say that it is too much of a strain upon its language.

The question was not settled in the Giletti case. It is being put up squarely to the same court in the Serio case. Until a decision is reached, we shall not believe that there is no power anywhere to question the Labor Department's arbitrary right to grant or refuse voluntary departures, a right, moreover, which is nowhere granted it in any statute. While his case is pending, the Labor Department has no jurisdiction. If Serio loses in court, it will be time enough to ask for favors from the Department of Labor.

New York, February 6 CAROL WEISS KING

The Life of Emily Howland

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: If any readers of *The Nation* have letters or other data concerning Miss Emily Howland of Sherwood, New York, I should be grateful for the loan of such material. I am preparing a record of the long life of this friend of humanity, and I need all possible aid in my work. My address is 1074 West Genesee Street, Syracuse, New York.

Syracuse, February 20 HARRIET MAY MILLS

Contributors to This Issue

OTTO BROK is on the Berlin staff of the Chicago *Daily News*.

MILTON ST. JOHN is the pen name of a Chicago writer whose work has appeared in the leading American reviews.

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL contributes verse to various periodicals.

GLENN W. BIRKETT is a dirt farmer who has occasionally written for publication.

KAY BOYLE is the author of "Wedding Day and Other Stories."

ABRAM L. HARRIS, professor of economics at Howard University, is coauthor of "The Black Worker."

HENRY BAMFORD PARKES is the author of "Jonathan Edwards."

DAVID EWEN is the editor of "From Bach to Stravinsky," to be published in March.

GENEVIEVE W. MASON is a social worker of long and varied experience.

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Books, Drama, Films

Hunt

By KAY BOYLE

the buckhounds went on under the rain
with the wet fern swinging lace over their eyes
and their skins hanging like crumpled velvet

the bucks shod with leaves like silk sandals
danced on chopsticks over the suey of red lizards
white stalks
and caterpillars

the gentlemen slapped with their crop-butts at their
clean leather

Now the gentlemen turn back out of the high dripping
world
to fires that repeat themselves in the copper of
andirons and whiskey glasses

with the throats of the buckhounds sunk over their
insteps
and the hound teats bruised blue on the fine floor

Edmund Wilson

Axel's Castle. By Edmund Wilson. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

THIS study of the imaginative literature of 1870 to 1930 seems to me destined to exercise a deeper influence on American criticism than any volume since "A Book of Prefaces," which appeared in 1917. The wide differences in temper and fundamental preoccupations between the two books reflect not only the differences between two personalities, but between two periods. Mr. Mencken was interested chiefly in American and English writers, and he made it his chief business to dynamite gentility and puritanism; Mr. Wilson's writers are cosmopolitan, and what he strives for is chiefly psychological and philosophic interpretation. An immediate key to their differences is to be found in their styles: if Mr. Wilson's prose lacks the vigor and pungency of Mr. Mencken's it lacks also its occasional monotony of rhythm and tone, and it is a more efficient and sensitive instrument for presenting subtleties of thought and for a sympathetic conveyance of a given author's vision or mood. Mr. Wilson's criticism, in fact, is an ideal example of precisely that "catalysis"—that chemical task of provoking a reaction between the work of art and the reader—which Mr. Mencken years ago declared to be the primary function of criticism.

This type of critical task was perhaps never more necessary than now, above all for the group of writers which Mr. Wilson discusses—W. B. Yeats, Paul Valéry, T. S. Eliot, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Rimbaud. All of these, he finds, stem more or less directly from one literary school, the symbolists. One of the principal aims of this school is to employ words, sounds, and arrangements rather for their suggestive qualities, their penumbras, so to speak, than for their central, immediate, or conventional meanings. The symbolists wish, in other words, to approximate in literature the indefiniteness of music. And this ideal derives from a wider ideal, that of retreat from the external world, the world of action, industrialism, and democratic communication, to a world of pure introspection and passivity, or at best of an esoteric communication motivated sometimes by mere snobbery and sometimes by a profound conviction either that the individual's experience and moods are so unique that nothing more than fragmentary communication is really possible, or at least that our experiences consist of such fine gradations and subtle and shifting intricacies that conventional language is too inadequate and clumsy a tool for conveying them.

Mr. Wilson begins his discussion of these "symbolist" writers in a modest, almost an elementary, manner. He conceives it to be his first duty to narrate, to explain, to interpret. Unlike most critics who have written about such writers as Eliot, Proust, and Joyce, Mr. Wilson proceeds almost as if his reader had no previous acquaintance with their work: he not only gives us a brief biographical sketch, but he tells the entire story, for example, both of "Ulysses" and of "A la recherche du temps perdu." It is usually not wise for a critic to tell us so much of the story, but in these two instances there exists unusual justification. In "Ulysses" the simple story is often buried under obscurities, digressions, and ellipses, and Proust's many-volumed novel is so huge that it does one little harm to have a map. Mr. Wilson, at all events, has worked on the sensible assumption that it is better that his reader should be told too much than too little. On the same assumption, he has written with remarkable lucidity. He is not among those critics who believe that lyric poetry should be criticized in lyrical prose, or that the way to prove one's critical appreciation of an esoteric or partly unintelligible book is to write about it even more unintelligibly. As a result of this unpretentiousness and completeness, "Axel's Castle" becomes valuable sheerly for the information it contains.

But Mr. Wilson is by no means content to stay within this modest beginning. In a dedicatory paragraph he states his idea of what literary criticism ought to be—"a history of man's ideas and imaginings in the setting of the conditions which have shaped them." His own work is an admirable embodiment of that aim. Not only does it realize Croce's critical ideal of describing the author's intent and his degree of success in achieving that intent, but it goes on to examine how far the author's intent itself is valid or important, and even how this intent came into being psychologically and historically. Thus not only are Mr. Wilson's individual essays on Joyce, Proust, Eliot, Valéry, and the rest little masterpieces of analysis and portraiture, distinguished by a rare combination of subtlety and strong common sense, but, not content with showing us the writers as individuals, they reveal the relation of these writers to their physical and cultural environment. In this respect, as well as in its vivid biographical sketches, Mr. Wilson's criticism sometimes recalls that of Taine, whose "environmental" method it applies without its originator's sometimes misguided dogmatism.

I hope I have by this time indicated plainly enough that I consider Mr. Wilson a very fine critic. He seems to me, for example, to have a much sharper and profounder mind than the late Stuart Sherman, about whose work so much strange fuss has been made. Sherman, after facing the entire new American literature with a mind closed by neophobia and moral squeamishness, suddenly opened it too wide and threw his standards overboard, but Mr. Wilson has kept a balanced course, bringing an always patient but never too credulous scrutiny to bear on writers who at first reading may have seemed unintelligible or even insane. But though in his criticism of contemporaries he begins, as Jules Lemaître so

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sanely advised, by looking for their possible merits rather than for their often more easily discovered faults, he never allows himself to be completely carried away. He feels that the writers with whom he is here concerned have given us works of literature which,

> . . . for intensity, brilliance, and boldness as well as for an architectural genius, an intellectual mastery of their materials . . . are probably comparable to the work of any time. . . . They have revealed to the imagination a new flexibility and freedom. . . . They break down the walls of the present and wake us to the hope and exaltation of the untried, unsuspected possibilities of human thought and art.

None the less, even in the masterpieces of this new literature Mr. Wilson is

> . . . oppressed by a sullenness, a lethargy, a sense of energies ingrown and sometimes festering . . . a leaden acquiescence in defeat. . . . I believe therefore that the time is at hand when these writers, who have largely dominated the literary world of the decade 1920-30, though we shall continue to admire them as masters, will no longer serve us as guides.

HENRY HAZLITT

Find Lincoln

Lincoln the Man. By Edgar Lee Masters. Dodd, Mead and Company. $5.

Lincoln the Politician. How the Rail-Splitter and Flat-Boatman Played the Great American Game. By Don C. Seitz. Coward-McCann. $4.

Lincoln and His Cabinet. By Clarence Edward Macartney. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50.

MR. MASTERS has set out to dissipate the Lincoln myth. Given a few books and a moderate amount of industry, the task should not have been difficult. We knew, long before Mr. Masters entered the lists, that Lincoln was not the great man he has commonly been represented as being: that his education was negligible and his reading narrow, that he was a moderately successful but rather unscrupulous lawyer, that he hungered for political office and steered his course in Illinois with an eye to the main chance, that he had upheld the right of secession as a Congressman only to oppose its application later as President, that he backed and filled before the slavery issue in the fifties and straddled it with some high moral gestures in his debate with Douglas, that his nomination in 1860 was carefully planned and suitably bargained for, that the outbreak of the Civil War found him in a daze, and that he was long in arriving at any but vague notions of how the breach was to be healed after victory and a place found for the freed Negroes. We knew also that as President he rode roughshod over the Constitution which he was sworn to uphold, that he was a poor judge of men, chose a mediocre and inharmonious Cabinet, and seemed often not to know good generals from bad ones, that he was a minority choice in 1860 and a Hobson's choice in 1864, and that only a martyr's crown, pressed upon him in a tragic moment when the North was rejoicing in victory, transformed him into a national idol and enthroned him among the immortals. There was no need of Mr. Masters's five hundred pages to tell us any of these things. All that was needed was that some one should tell them more fully, frankly, and convincingly than they had been told before, and exactly as they were and are.

Mr. Masters has not been content, however, to attack the Lincoln of myth and tell the uncomfortable truth about him. He has felt called upon to go farther, and not only to throw into prominence whatever of Lincoln could be made petty, repulsive, or unscrupulous, but also to indict the American people and their government all along the line. If his studies have not made him hate and despise the Lincoln whom he has discovered, he has been singularly inept in concealing whatever admiration he may have. The moving picture which he unreels shows a Lincoln ignorant, lazy, "grotesquely dressed," undersexed, cold, superstitious, a palterer if not a worker of duplicity in the Illinois legislature, dragging religion into politics and exhibiting a "Jehoviac diabolism" in his second inaugural, a political trimmer, and so on. As for the country and the government, both went wrong before and during his time and have continued to go wrong at an increasingly rapid pace ever since. According to Mr. Masters, State rights and strict construction embodied the true theory of the Constitution and should never have been departed from, the Missouri Compromise was a mischievous outrage, abolition and anti-slavery had not a leg to stand upon in opposition to the clear rights of the South, and the Civil War opened the way to chaos. In the final chapter, with Lincoln dead, Mr. Masters lets himself go in a prolonged wail over the whole array of national evils that followed the war: reconstruction, the Republican Party, "the feculence of the Credit Mobilier" and "the cloacas of the political rings in the cities," "the spawn of lowest hell," monopoly, tariffs, banks, franchises, "a new set of thieves in the public Treasury" let in "under the guise of piety and humanitarianism," the unholy procession of Presidents from Hayes to Taft, the churches that "rule the country," prohibition, a dead literature, materialism. The only wonder is that a republic so debased should have survived.

"Lincoln the Man," in short, is a political diatribe such as might have come out of the remotest quarters of the ante-bellum South, carried forward into the years of political and social confusion after the Civil War. That it is not a more worthy performance is sincerely to be regretted, for Mr. Masters had an inviting opportunity. The two volumes of Beveridge's unfinished biography of Lincoln come down only to 1859, and there was a place for a book which, building upon the foundations which Beveridge laid, should continue the critical evaluation of Lincoln's career into and through its Presidential phase. There was certainly no need to recount again in detail the events of Lincoln's earlier life. Mr. Masters, who has nothing of particular importance to add about this early period, takes fourteen of his eighteen chapters to get Lincoln into the White House, and merely skims the great political and social issues and the military events of the war period. The truth which he presents could hardly at best be anything but unpalatable to hero-worshipers and patriots, for myths go far to make history as history is commonly believed, but the violent language, the intense prejudice, and the bitter feeling that characterize the book are likely to make less hostile readers suspect that there must be, after all is said and done, another and more favorable side.

Mr. Seitz has no idol to topple and no acid gibes and sneers to throw about, but he, too, offers a conception of Lincoln which is not the whole story. To him, Lincoln is the masterful politician, consummate in his ability to handle men, whether of his own party or of the opposition, plainly not lacking in guile or inattentive to his personal chances, but making his way in a troubled period shrewdly, patiently, good-naturedly, with humor and homely wisdom. Even on the political side, however, much is left out of the narrative or so lightly touched as to make the book, as a political study, superficial. It has, on the other hand, a lively style, it abounds in anecdotes and local or personal digressions, and its general tone is assuring. One gathers that while Mr. Seitz does not think too highly of American politicians, he is ready to accept them as a necessary evil and discovers in Lincoln one of the best of the lot.

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Mr. Macartney concedes the existence of a Lincoln legend, but it seems to him to be beneficent and not baleful, and one best dealt with by observing Lincoln through "those great intellects and noble patriots" who formed his Cabinet. The book is a collection of eight biographical sketches, pleasantly written and sensibly patriotic, but without essential novelty either in matter or in point of view. Since the real Lincoln is still a subject of debate, the book may be commended to those who prefer to have him and his associates presented in a friendly light.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

The Russian Experiment

The Economic Life of Russia. By Calvin B. Hoover. The Macmillan Company. $3.

Russia's Productive System. By Emile Burns. E. P. Dutton and Company. $4.

The Russian Experiment. By Arthur Feiler. Translated from the German by H. J. Stenning. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

TRADITIONAL Marxian theory has long taught that the "organization of the proletariat as a revolutionary class," the necessary first step toward socialism, presupposes "the finished existence of all the productive forces which can develop in the bosom of the old society." This denial of the possibility of socialism in industrially backward countries, implicit in the policies of the Second International, shaped the course of world socialism as long as the International remained the undisputed oracle of Marxian prophecy. But when the Russian Bolshevists were ensconced in power by the October revolution of 1917, Nickolai Lenin reasoned:

> How utterly mechanical is that idea learned by heart during the development of Western European social democracy, that we in Russia have not yet grown up to socialism, that we lack . . . the objective economic premises for socialism. . . . Why can we not begin by winning with a revolution the premises for that definite level of culture and then afterward, on the basis of the workers' and peasants' power and the soviet structure, set out to catch up with other peoples?

This determination expressed by Lenin to socialize an essentially agrarian country repudiated both the orthodox Socialist theory and the revolutionary tactics of the Second International. Yet the mere reformulation of Marxian ideology, however necessary as a justification of "proletarian dictatorship in a land of peasants," did not guarantee communism. Because modern industrialism was foreign to Russian soil, its technique and the economic discipline and social habits which it engenders were almost alien characteristics. Successful socialization, then, required more than a program of rapid mechanization. It demanded the integration of this with a planned non-competitive economy for which human history offered neither model nor guiding experience, and the reconditioning of human nature as it had hitherto been known to Russian life. And now, thirteen years after the October revolution, the fate of communism is still unpredictable. Although unable to forecast the future, Calvin Hoover, Emile Burns, and Arthur Feiler, in three works, greatly increase our understanding of the present Communist state and the vicissitudes through which it is passing. All three authors conclude that the achievements of the new regime are exceptionally gratifying, though in many quarters contradictory and beset with recurring probability of disaster.

The productive mechanism of the new economy, described in detail by Dr. Hoover and Mr. Burns, and more critically by Dr. Feiler, is beginning to run with efficiency and smoothness. Decentralization and coordination are making rapid headway upon bureaucracy. The coordination and direction of industry are vested in the Supreme Economic Council with its provincial councils and Department of Technical Economic Planning. That body supervises the distribution of the profits and losses and the appointment of the technical staff of the various industries, but does not meddle with the operation and management of them. Each industry is autonomous. Large-scale industry was formerly organized into "trusts," which set up "syndicates" for marketing purposes. The syndicate is now being scrapped for the "combine" (*obedinenie*). When this transformation is complete, the combine in a given industry will not only possess the commercial features of the syndicate, but will also form the connecting link between factories and the trusts in that industry and the rest of the industrial, commercial, banking, and agricultural life of the country.

Even in small-scale industry, trade, and handicrafts, collectivization is pushed relentlessly by the Communist Party, the real power behind the scene. Agriculture must also yield. The large estates of the old aristocracy are being turned into state farms (*sovkhoz*), in reality grain factories which use much machinery and little man power. The peasantry is being pushed into one of the three types of agricultural collectives (*kolkhoz*)—namely, the commune, the highest type constituting pure communism; the simple collective, "in which land is cultivated in common but work animals and other inventory are private property"; or the artel, in which not only is land tilled in common but all work animals and animals whose products are sold on the market are socialized. The artel is the most common type of kolkhoz.

The success that has followed socialistic adaptation of American mass production under the aegis of the Five-Year Plan, or *Piatiletka*, has been remarkable. During the first year of the plan the productivity of large-scale industry increased 23.4 per cent over that of 1927-28, although an increase of only 21.4 per cent was called for. The production of consumption goods, which according to the plan was to increase 18.6 per cent over 1927-28, actually increased 21 per cent. The results in some lines, especially in small industry and agriculture, were not so favorable. The urban proletariat is being spurred by socialist emulation and rivalry to greater efficiency. But production costs are still relatively high, and industrial products still crude. In spite of increased productivity of labor, wages still lag behind prices, which are about 25 per cent higher than in the United Kingdom. While a wage of $36 a month was considered high in 1929, the material well-being of labor is augmented by benefits derived from an elaborate scheme of social insurance.

Describing the plan as a whole, Dr. Feiler observes that it means that a capital investment of 92,700,000,000 rubles, or approximately $44,000,000,000 calculated at 1926-27 prices, must be squeezed out of the lives of poor people for five years. For the plan to succeed, the Russian workers and peasants "must accumulate capital by saving whilst increasing the output of their . . . labor and restricting their . . . immediate consumption."

The plan is now in its third year. The results of the second year were not available when these books were written. According to an abridged version of the results appearing in the London *Economist* in November, 1930, and recently summarized by George Soule in the *New Republic*, the accomplishment in the second year was almost unbelievable. And the second year is to be surpassed by the third. This requires a quickening of the already nerve-racking tempo of industrialization of farm and factory, and forcing the acceptance of socialized farming upon a recalcitrant peasantry.

Agriculture is the Communist dictatorship's greatest problem. Although the state controls banking, credit, and prices, it lacks foreign credit and must pay for the mounting industrial

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imports necessitated by the Five-Year Plan with increasingly heavy agricultural exports. If socialism is to be achieved, agriculture must be made to yield larger surpluses by means of industrialization and collectivization. This process will reduce the peasant to a proletarian, thus bringing about Lenin's much desired union (*smychka*) of urban proletariat and peasantry. But the movement has met the resistance of both the rich peasants (*kulaki*) and the middle peasants (*ceredniki*). At times it has been resisted by the poorest peasants (*bedniki*). Peasant uprisings and disaffection encountered the armed forces of the government. "Liquidation of the kulak" became so much of a bloody witch hunt that Stalin himself halted the excesses by his famous *Pravda* article, Dizziness from Success. In 1929 only about half of the peasant farms were in collectives. According to Dr. Hoover, the plan for the total sown area was fulfilled only to the extent of 97.4 per cent in 1928-29. The amount of bread grain collected from the 1929 harvest was 103 per cent of the plan, but was attained at the point of bayonets. Today the burden of agricultural socialization is placed upon the state farms. As these farms are highly industrialized, they constantly displace labor, swelling the float of agricultural workers to the city. Unless this float is quickly cared for, the Communists' neatly balanced economy will find itself distressingly upset.

Will this heroically ambitious plan succeed? Can communism succeed in Russia? The plan still entails incalculable human costs in nervous strain, physical sacrifice, and bloodshed. It demands conformity, intellectual monotony, and the suppression of individual freedom. But Dr. Feiler thinks that the willingness of the great majority of the people to bear material privation with calm indifference is greatly to the advantage of the dictatorship. Moreover:

> The great bulk of the population can form no conception of the old way of living . . . To them it seems soft, senseless, and unreal. They have no longer any attachment to the old life. And the West—even the Russian emigration in the West—is so alien to their lives and even to their wishes that they regard a return thereto as something to be rejected as inconceivable. And in this change of heart consists . . . the chance of this revolution.

ABRAM L. HARRIS

Lord Nelson

Nelson. By George Edinger and E. J. C. Neep. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. $3.

IMAGINE a man devoured by passion for glory and for beautiful women. Through reckless courage and persistent disobedience to his superiors he becomes prominent in naval victories; he makes himself a popular idol by having letters printed in the newspapers in which his achievements are magnified and his colleagues are belittled. He is captivated by the wife of a British ambassador, herself formerly a blacksmith's daughter, a painter's model, and the mistress of half a dozen lovers; he deserts his own wife and lives with her in a relationship which only her husband imagines to be platonic; his vanity and immorality make his position impossible in English society. Finally he deliberately seeks death in battle, in the hope that a grateful country may forgive and reward his mistress and daughter. He becomes the national hero of the most puritanical country in the world; but his mistress is left to starve, and his vices are concealed by pious biographers.

Such is the theme of this book. Its style is vivid and amusing; the background is suggested by a few picturesque anecdotes; there is never a superfluous word; no recent biography has imitated so successfully the methods of Mr. Lytton Strachey. Unfortunately, nobody who knows anything about Nelson will accept this presentation for a moment.

There is ample evidence that Nelson was loved by all who knew him, especially by those colleagues who ought, according to this biography, to have been most offended by his greed for fame. As a naval commander he was distinguished by a most careful attention to detail, and by a vitality which could inspire his subordinates. Off his quarterdeck he was a child, and his vices were those of one without experience of the world, not of a deliberate adventurer. At Cape St. Vincent he did not prevent Jervis from rounding up five Spanish ships; but for his disobedience to orders the two divisions of the Spanish fleet would have united, and the battle would have been indecisive. At the Nile the decisive movement was made by Captain Foley, but only in obedience to plans often discussed in Nelson's cabin during the voyage from Sicily. At Copenhagen withdrawal in obedience to Parker would have meant the destruction of the British fleet; and if the request for a truce was a virtual confession of defeat, it is strange that the ships aground were not immediately floated off. Lady Hamilton was not left to starve; her resources would have been ample but for her own extravagance. These are merely a few of the misrepresentations made by these clever and unscrupulous *advocati diaboli.* It is strange that they have not succeeded in giving the credit for Trafalgar to somebody else.

HENRY BAMFORD PARKES

A Jazz Rhapsody

Tin Pan Alley. By Isaac Goldberg. The John Day Company. $3.50.

TIN PAN ALLEY has for these many years been crying for a historian. For Tin Pan Alley is a name heavy with glamor. From a most humble and pitiable origin down at the dim gas-lit Fourteenth Street which stretched from Union Square to Second Avenue—where, in this Mecca of burlesque houses, bawdy places, and cheap dance-halls the first of America's popular songs were created—it rose in forty years to be one of America's greatest industries. During these years reputations have been swept from the obscurest corners of the Alley unto the uppermost stars; and reputations have here been just as securely buried. During these years the silhouettes of glamorous figures have passed across the graphic background: illiterate composers who hoped to de-de-de-dum their way into immortality—and did; "personality boys," as song-pluggers, on whom the fate of many a song rested; hard-boiled publishers who looked upon this composing racket as a high-powered business which must be run with precision and accuracy; vaudeville actors who swarmed in the Alley, each hoping to be the fortunate one to be the first to put that song sensation of the year across. . . . During these years an aboriginal, naive, and utterly artless music grew into real musical significance. This, then, is a story—vivid with coruscant colors, pulsing with real drama. This is a story that has been begging for treatment between two book-covers for ever so long. How is it that Tin Pan Alley has had to wait so long for its saga?

But if it has waited an unduly long time for its history, it has not waited in vain. In Isaac Goldberg the Alley has found a sympathetic historian whose racy pen has succeeded with remarkable felicity in transferring to paper something of the spirit of the Alley. There is *élan* and vitality in his story of the Alley's rise and growth, from the prehistoric Harrigan and Hart days until our own time of Gershwinian jazz-sophistication. Now he writes with tongue in cheek—for, after all, that is the only way in which an intelligent man can hope

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to speak about so much of the simplicities which characterize so many of the Alley's effusions; now he is truly critical—his essay, Before the Flood, on the background of American music is always sane and often penetrating; now he is remarkably informative—one learns here for the first time the entire subtle mechanism of Tin Pan Alley which produces the song hits and then launches them forth upon the world; now he is analytical—his analysis of the structure of jazz and his criticism of its strength and weakness are intelligent and farsighted; and now he merely rambles aimlessly along, speaking amusing things about famous song-pluggers and their methods, about some of the phenomenal song sales, about the influence of the talking picture on the song racket.

George Gershwin, to whom the book is dedicated, has written a pleasing introduction. One might question Mr. Gershwin's enthusiasm in calling this work "a valuable addition to our archives of Americana." Notwithstanding Mr. Goldberg's insistence, we fail to be convinced that Tin Pan Alley is half so important historically, or as a phase of the American mind or culture, as it is colorful and interesting.

DAVID EWEN

Books in Brief

Novels and Novelists. By Katherine Mansfield. Edited by J. Middleton Murry. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.

Katherine Mansfield's loyal followers will be pleased with these literary essays, a series of book reviews written for the *Athenaeum* of 1919 and 1920. In a clear, penetrating, and sometimes mocking style, she exposes the occasional novels of Somerset Maugham, Virginia Woolf, Joseph Hergesheimer, John Galsworthy, and others less illustrious to a deft and witty analysis. But the significance of this publication does not lie in her verdicts on her contemporaries or in the accuracy of her literary prophecies. It is valuable as an additional chapter in the record of her brief career. These reviews, joined to her letters, her journal, and her stories build up a lifelike picture of a compelling and sympathetic personality.

In Defence of Sensuality. By John Cowper Powys. Simon and Schuster. $3.

Here is an elaboration of the "mythology" that underlies "Wolf Solent." With the postulate that "the gregarious instincts of humanity have ruined the happiness of the individual," Mr. Powys proposes a mystical hedonism as the way of salvation. He pictures the lonely human personality as a lambent spear-point of consciousness piercing the cosmic darkness—an image that inevitably recalls Pater's "hard and gemlike flame." But the genteel aestheticism of Pater is far from the hearty sensuousness of Mr. Powys, who brings together in the ego intimations of our subhuman ancestors and adumbrations of the "divine-devilish First Cause." Each of us is a potential demon-saint, and the core of our being is an "ichthyosaurus-ego." True happiness is to be found only in the recognition of our absolute loneliness, abandonment of "the preposterous claims of a life of action," and ecstatic awareness of our essential kinship to earth, air, fire, and water—the fourfold aspect of eternal energy.

Makers of Modern Europe. By Count Carlo Sforza. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $5.

A collection of personality sketches of the men who are popularly supposed to have made modern Europe. It includes such men as Aehrenthal, Tisza, and Pachich, in addition to some of the more obvious personalities, but it omits Holstein, Isvolsky, Dmowski, Lords Grey and Carnock, and a number

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of other men who had more to do with the job than did the Bonar Laws, Pilsudskis, and Vandervelde that Count Sforza includes. There is in the work nothing of considerable or permanent consequence.

Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives. A Note on Their Lives and Times. By Russel Crouse. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $5.

This collection of Currier and Ives prints, many of them beautifully reproduced in color, is amply worth its cost. Except to those connoisseurs who demand the bona fide article and will have none other, the reproductions are amusing to look at and (let it be whispered) charming when framed and hung on the wall. Sleighing in Central Park, the Chicago Fire, and the Lightning Express are among the gems of the collection, and one may be pardoned the sacrilege of tearing them out of the book partly because Mr. Crouse's text, patronizing and heavily humorous in tone, is not worthy of them. The true history of America for fifty years or so probably lies in these drawings—color, caption, and all. But they need a commentator who will realize their worth without feeling it necessary to get a laugh on every page.

Gulab Singh, Founder of Kashmir. By K. M. Panikkar. London: Martin Hopkinson. 7s. 6d.

Gulab Singh, capable organizer, wise politician, stern conqueror and ruler, who made the present state of Jammu and Kashmir about eighty years ago, is an unusual subject for a biography. He is here treated to a whitewash. He was a strong enough character for his ruthlessness to need no suppression, and historic details of importance should not have been omitted. The book is amazingly dull.

Films

Charlie Chaplin Falters

CHAPLIN'S latest picture, "City Lights" (Cohan), has been greeted with the general acclaim of the press, an acclaim so fervent that it surpasses even the unmeasured enthusiasm over his performances in the past. The three years of publicity (largely gratuitous, no doubt) that preceded the showing of the picture possibly have had something to do with this. Likewise, the impressive fact of a silent picture coming out of dialogue-ridden Hollywood. But the magic of Charlie Chaplin's name must have been the strongest factor. Only this can account for the acclamation of "City Lights" as the crowning achievement of Chaplin's art. The truth is, it is the feeblest of his longer pictures. "The Kid," "The Gold Rush," "The Circus" (I am one of the unfortunate few who missed seeing "The Pilgrim") gave us the mature Chaplin, less spontaneous, perhaps, than in his still earlier "A Dog's Life" or "Shoulder Arms," but just as subtle in his whimsicalities and a little more wistful. In "City Lights" there are few whimsicalities, while what was intended to be wistfulness has clearly degenerated into something decidedly maudlin.

One has feared for some time that this was going to happen. There were alarming signs of it in "The Circus," although they were heavily outweighed by the amazing ingenuity of the episodes which revealed the fantastic naturalness of the little tramp. In "City Lights" the only scenes that have this fantastic quality are those depicting the desperate venture of our hero into the business of prize fighting. There we get our old Chaplin, the personification of a helpless and guileless soul who resorts to grotesquely fantastic, though

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essentially natural, devices to get himself out of a tight corner. In Chaplin's art what he does has always been as important as how he does it. His little tricks and unexpected twists of action may be described as "gags," but there is a world of difference between them and, for instance, such gags as are used by Harold Lloyd. Lloyd's gags are merely external situations in no way connected with his screen personality, which, by the way, is little more than a void. Chaplin's gags, on the contrary, spring from the very nature of the character he has created and are the principal means of revealing that character. It is because of his ingenious reactions to the situations in which he finds himself that we have come to love the absurd little fellow; we would fain imitate him if we could only divest ourselves of our respectable habits. To be sure, we laugh at his droll ways, but we also pity him for being always at odds with the world, a round peg in a square hole. There is pathos enough in the character himself not to need any stressing by means of a sentimental plot. Chaplin's growing seriousness, his desire to be more than a mere comedian have deceived him into holding sentiment more precious than fun. He has paid dearly for this error of judgment by producing a picture of which less than a quarter does credit to his genius.

If I ask for more fantasy in Chaplin's pictures, I should be content, not to say pleased, with much less of it in such a picture as "Trader Horn" (Astor). Somehow the fantasy here fails to blend with the realistic background. The blame for this must be laid largely at the feet of that entertaining spinner of yarns, Mr. Aloysius Horn, though the director, too, is guilty of some quite uncalled-for crudities. Apart from this, the picture is a magnificent record of wild life in Central Africa, abounding in thrilling episodes and in scenic splendors. The natives who play a prominent part in the story prove to be excellent actors and are approached in this among the white members of the cast only by Mr. Carey in his fine characterization of Trader Horn.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

Drama

True to Tripe

SINCE last week I have seen no play which seems to me worth discussing at length. But I have seen three plays which might be considered together as examples of the imitative art. I do not use the word imitation here in any of its better senses. For it has its better senses. When art, for instance, imitates life—and it has never been decided just how it does that, if it does it at all—when art, shall we say instead, produces the conviction that it has imitated life, something of undoubted value has been done. The result may also be fine when one good artist imitates another—the two of them collaborating, so to speak, in the expression of some sort of truth which has an existence independent of either of them. I use the word in neither of those senses, but rather in the worst sense of all, the sense which reminds us that there are imitations of bad imitations. I saw three plays which any observer with presence of mind could have detected—not as imitations, perhaps, for he may never have seen other plays of the types to which they belong, but as pieces of untruth. A good imitation can be a good thing in itself. A bad imitation not only may be a bad thing in itself; it may derive from something just as bad, something which has been bad from the beginning of time.

"Doctor X," a "mystery melodrama" by Howard Warren Comstock and Allen C. Miller (Hudson Theater), depends

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for its success upon our believing that ordinary citizens like ourselves can remain two minutes in a dark room full of daggers and shadows without dying of fright. The authors of this piece prepared the room for us with a good deal of ingenuity. The laboratory of Dr. Xavier is really a terrible place. But they did not take the precaution to people it with men and women of iron, persons of some other blood than ours, demons of courage and unimagination. They introduced instead a band of simple souls as capable of panic as we are. We can't believe they will survive a minute. When they do, as of course is necessary if the play is to last two hours, we decide that we can too; and sit back in comparative comfort while three murders take place and two more are attempted. If the heroine can walk right through that paneled door on the left where both we and she knew that the Killer has of late been lurking, then we know there is nothing back of it but an actor. Now there have been mystery plays which actually scared us. We have the right therefore to resent one which asks us to be afraid of a property cap and cloak.

"Hobo," a piece of good-hearted roughness by Frank Merlin (Morosco Theater), is much better than that. Its scenes are varied and interesting, it has some human lines, and its leading personage, a hobo named St. Louis Blackie, who is very well played by Paul Kelly, emerges to a kind of pathetic isolation both from the rest of the people whom he meets in the story and from the world in general. St. Louis Blackie has all the makings of a character. But Mr. Merlin has weakened him by making him ashamed of the ideas and emotions which define that character. He is not an ordinary hobo. He is distinguished by a set of principles which he calls "rules." But he is always checking himself as he announces these principles and saying: "Gee, I'm gettin' mushy." Mr. Merlin, in other words, wanted to put something into his play besides the talk of tramps but thought he needed to apologize for doing so. It would have been better either to be content with regular tramps, in which case he might have given us a nice touch of local color, or to have the courage of his thought and endow a hero with the same courage. The result of his calling his ideas mush is, curiously enough, that we take them as mush. This picture of a strong man who blushes whenever he feels himself being himself is not merely a picture that has been too often painted; it is untrue to what we expect in the theater; and for all I know it is untrue to the world of hobos, or for that matter to any world.

"Heat Wave," by Roland Pertwee (Fulton Theater), is all about British ladies and gentlemen in India who drink whiskey and soda, get fanned by the natives on hot days, say "cheerio," "righto," and "quite!" and argue over-long about very obvious points of honor, both feminine and masculine. The hero, who is played by Basil Rathbone as well as he could ever be played, appears to be some sort of saint who by his alacrity in saving distressed ladies from their stupid husbands or brothers has earned the reputation of being a sinner. It all comes out right in the end, of course, and the husband who will not trust his wife with such a saint is duly confounded. Love and honor. An old theme, and still a powerful one. But not in this atmosphere of "By Jove," "Have a drink?" and "Yes, sahib."

MARK VAN DOREN

"America's Sweetheart" (Broadhurst) is a pleasant musical comedy which follows the lead of "Once in a Lifetime" in spoofing Hollywood. Its humor is often bawdy but is well sustained; the music by Richard Rodgers is reasonably tuneful and the lyrics by Lorenz Hart are considerably above the average. The performance is helped a great deal by the voice and vivacious presence of the imported Jean Aubert.

H. H.

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"Free" Slaves in West Africa

By GENEVIEVE W. MASON.

WE have been hearing of late about slavery in Liberia. To some of us it seems impossible, to some absurd, that slavery should still exist. That it does exist, though not under that name, in West Africa and North Africa the writer, at least, can attest.

In 1927-28 my daughter and I were the only women passengers after the third port of call on a freight ship delivering freight to West Africa. We touched at twenty-four different ports in all, and at some of them twice; going out, we carried flour in 100-pound sacks, gasoline in cases containing two five-gallon cans, mixed goods in grocery boxes, Chevrolet trucks in packing cases, and structural steel on deck; returning, we loaded palm oil, cocoa, and mahogany.

At Freetown, Sierre Leone, we picked up a crew of sixty-odd natives, "Kroo boys," so-called because most of them belong to that tribe, which is considered commercially more dependable than others. The tribe itself consists of scattered bands in different parts of Sierre Leone, speaking different dialects. Men from other tribes are used to fill in. They are in charge of a headman chosen by the central chief who lets out the help to the shipping companies. The Kroo boys receive from three shillings as laborers to six as donkey-man. They pay the headman, and he pays the chief. They work ten hours every day, almost always at heavy work, usually six or eight hours on Sundays and holidays, and frequently until ten o'clock, sometimes all night long, when in port. They go with the ship from Freetown or another port of Sierre Leone, working cargo all the way down the coast and back to their home port.

As we had no one aboard our ship qualified to handle illness or injury, I volunteered to take charge of the ship's company for the voyage, and left her when the Kroo boys did. Generally speaking, the West African natives are clean and dirty, kind and cruel, ambitious and lazy, superstitious and suspicious, tolerant and revengeful. In these opposite traits lies the secret of their failure to succeed as blacks and the secret of their submission to white domination. Slavery originated among the natives of Africa. The early white traders found tribe after tribe of blacks who practiced slavery among themselves and were prepared to betray their enemies and sell their own undesirables for a song. Inter-tribal wars were ceaselessly waged, and foreign slave-traders easily got the pick of the captures.

This kind of slavery still exists in northern Africa. Slaves are bought, through the itinerant and resident Arabs of the lower part of the continent, by men of consequence, who use them for the most part as bodyguards. These slaves have personal liberty but no rights of marriage or property. As far as one can learn they are usually well dressed, well treated, and well fed.

But not the so-called free men of the West Coast. In the English colonies servants are paid a maximum of three shillings a day (two is more frequent) and must board themselves. They have to keep their white clothes spotlessly clean and themselves ready to do any kind of work for any number of hours a day. Their women must be prepared to obey the master and his friends, even to bear him children and keep quiet about it. If a "boy" displeases his boss he is discharged and given a recommendation, called a "book," so worded that no one else will hire him. One such was one of many who applied to me. His "book," written in polite English, informed me that anyone hiring him did so at his own risk. The boy was hungry; he had had no work for weeks.

An American who lived in Nigeria told me that he came home at half-past one in the morning and found his boy waiting for him for the single purpose of taking off his boots. The boy was asleep. He kicked him down the steps and out of his service.

At another place my daughter and I purchased six small wine glasses. One native was sent to some distance to get another native to carry our package a few yards for us to our boat. In Nigeria I saw two Englishmen with limber swagger sticks switching and cutting the legs of native boys and girls from eight to sixteen years old, to make them hasten their work of carrying on their head two five-gallon cans of gasoline in one box the three hundred yards or more to the warehouse. I mentioned this to an older man.

"Nearly all the young ones behave that way when they first come out here," he said; "we older men don't bother to. Of course it is unfortunate at a time of unrest such as the present." The natives were in more or less open rebellion at the time against insufferable taxation, which they claimed was mostly beneficial to British commerce. "But you know that is the reason we can endure conditions of residence here. It is the power we have over the natives. If we lifted our hand to do anything they'd simply have no respect for us." That is the attitude in the British colonies. Give the native enough education, civil and political, to make a British subject of him, let him handle property that is not otherwise wanted, tax him all he will stand, send him to hospitals to keep the country fairly healthy, give him a whistle to his policeman's uniform, but let him know for all time who is master.

In the French colonies conditions are worse. Education is neglected, the native has little civic opportunity, and there is lacking even that palliative care which the British have provided. On the Gold Coast we saw forty men from the hills, forced labor, taken from their homes and occupations by contract with their chief. They were hitched by long chains to a mahogany log sixteen feet long and five feet thick and compelled by an overseer with an old-fashioned blacksnake whip in his hand to haul that log from where it had been tumbled off a railroad flat-car over sand and underbrush a good thousand feet to the sea, where it was finally launched, chained to nine or ten others dragged down the same way by the same gang. Some of the men were emaciated, some had legs covered with ulcers, some stumbled and fell, rising again and struggling forward as the attentive overseer drew near. We did not see him beat

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them, but the whip cracked accompaniment to his loud language. Those men were paid one to four francs a day (the franc was then worth four cents) at the end of some months of labor. They were housed in filthy quarters, and fed dried fish and rice once, sometimes twice, a day. Dried fish and rice! The white man's alibi. Diseases of malnutrition, tuberculosis, unhealed wounds. Unspeakable wretchedness. Fearful neglect in the native hospitals, especially the French, where white doctors experiment or ignore and the sometimes uncannily skilled native doctor is debarred.

Dried fish and rice again on the ships, where overcrowding and overwork are incessant, where even the steam to cook the food is often turned on too late, and sometimes not at all, and the chief engineer cuts down the fresh water to save that much expense. That happened on our ship. Our chief was a Greek and violently hated all black men. Native West Africans, who are very clean, require and are allowed daily fresh water for drinking and bathing. It amounts to about five quarts a day. In the hottest weather, when they were working between-decks twelve to sixteen hours a day on palm oil, they were refused this ludicrously small amount of water because the chief had not bought water enough at Lagos and would not run the condenser. He ran among them swearing like a madman, and had to be pulled off the deck by the chief mate, who, with the captain, happened to be humane.

Everything depends upon the ship's officers, for the men work every hatch, and consequently under many masters. Many officers approve of or condone slavery, and here is their chance to demonstrate. And a whining native or a persistent or rebellious one simply loses his job for all time.

Some German ships give their men medical attention; they say it pays. Yet when one native on our ship had his entire leg split open and his toe crushed by a defective link from a hoisting chain, it was only through personal influence that I was able even to get two weeks' hospital expenses from the company, and two weeks' pay out of three months' time lost. Had he died, of course, it would have been that much saved.

The West African, as I have said, is clean and dirty. His experience with animal parasites in the jungle and his water life make him clean. Deny him the facilities and he at once becomes filthy. Naturally he is a simple, childish creature. Give him an example of drunkenness, licentiousness, and cruelty, and with his inborn dramatic sense he will out-Caesar Caesar and become insufferable.

He is superstitious and suspicious, but nevertheless tolerant, owing perhaps to his ignorance, perhaps to that native grace and dignity which so often puts to shame the red-faced white man bawling epithets. He is revengeful, and here he is foolish too, for his scheming is not clever enough to redress his wrongs, and his spite is vented too often upon his own race, preventing that cohesion among tribes which is so vitally necessary to freedom.

All this being true—and let us even suppose that it is only partially true—it is obvious that a mere Anglo-American protectorate to restrain slavery in Liberia offers no solution. Belgium has by no means turned over a new leaf in the Congo. In Portuguese Angola there is complete neglect. Germany, the least tarred, should have a voice. Why not once and for all hand over the matter to the League of Nations?

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